THE

Real Doctrine

OF THE

CATHOLIC CHURCH

ON THE

SCRIPTURE.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

AN ACCOUNT OF THE CONVERSIONS OF THE DUKE OF BRUNSWICK, AND OF THE HON. AND REV. GEORGE SPENCER, SON OF LORD SPENCER, AND BROTHER OF LORD ALTHORP.

BY THE

Rev. N. RIGBY, of Egton Bridge.

Do read it, I hope you will find in it nothing to offend, but, something to please.

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TO THE

REV. BENEDICT RAYMENT, V. G.



REV. SIR,

Young and unexperienced people, will naturally seek, (if they wish to act prudently,) to strengthen their first and weak exertions, by the advice and approbation of the aged, the learned, and the experienced. How fortunate, Rev. Sir, am I in this respect, by having the advice and approbation of you, in whom are united the valuable treasures of age, of learning, and of experience. Trivial as this pamphlet is in itself, still when the public learn, that it has received the approbation, and been honoured, whilst in the press, by the inspection of the Very Rev. Benedict Rayment. I think, it will not fail, to attract the attention of both the Catholic and the Protestant in York, and other parts. They will be anxious, I have no doubt, to convince you, how highly you stand in their estimation, by shewing you, that things, which are in themselves only paltry, become objects of interest and attention, when they are honoured by your sanction and patronage. Nor can any one, who is acquainted with your character, say, that this is the effusion of flattery. No, your character as a gentleman and a minister, as a scholar and as a kind friend to the poor, the widow and the orphan, of all persuasions, is too well established, ever to need the vain effusions of empty flattery.—What ever defects and imperfections may appear in the following pages, the public will have the good sense to attribute them to me, their author; nor can they, Rev. Sir, be imputed to you in any other light, except to your want of time to

attend to them, on account of your multiplicity of more important engagements in your advanced age, or to your unwillingness to discourage the young in their first efforts by too tedious a correction. In conclusion, Rev. Sir, allow me to congratulate you (and I am sure all your worthy congregation will unite with me) on your having reached your seventy-first year, and on your still being able to continue your zealous labours of the ministry. The long and unwearied exertions of your ministry, must be a subject of sorrow and of joy to us all; of sorrow, to think that ere long we shall be deprived of the valuable assistance of your learning and experience; but of joy to reflect, that the time cannot be far distant, when you will be in the hands of Him, who has declared, "blessed are they that instruct others unto justice, for they shall shine like stars for all eternity."—Duly sensible of, and I hope grateful for all your past favours,

I remain

Very Rev. Sir,

most respectfully,

your obliged Servant,

N. RIGBY.

Egton Bridge,

January 8th, 1834.

ON THE

SCRIPTURE.

RELIGIOUS charity requires that we should not judge any sect of christians from the representations of their enemies alone, without first hearing or reading what they have to allege in their own defence. No one can say, that this observation is not founded on the plainest principles of justice, on those plain principles of equity, which it would be deemed highly criminal to violate in the ordinary concerns of common life. One of the grand maxims of the English law, is, that no one shall be condemned before he has been heard in his own defence. I think it will be also allowed, that every minister is justified, in endeavouring to remove any false impressions, that may have been formed by the public against his religion, provided in the execution of his task, he pays a due respect to the feelings of his dissenting brethren and shews, that he is actuated by the laudable maxim of the great St. Augustine. "In articles of faith let there be unity, in matters of doubt let there be liberty, and in all things let there be charity."

My christian but dissenting brethren, allow us Catholics the benefit of the two maxims, which I have just laid down. Do not, I entreat you, condemn us on any point, before you have heard us in our own defence: and if in advocating our cause, we speak to you with sentiments of candour, sincerity and charity, listen to us, I beg of you, with corresponding sentiments of candour, sincerity and charity.

I have often heard it urged against us (and I believe it is a general opinion) that catholics are inimical to the scripture, and that the common people of our persuasion are not allowed to read it. But I can confidently assure the public, that the catholics neither are, nor *ever* were enemies to the scripture, and that there neither is. nor ever was a general law prohibiting the people from reading the authorized translations of the scripture. Of the truth of these assertions, I will endeavour to convince the public: but, before I proceed to the task, I will state as shortly as I can, what are the sentiments of every true catholic respecting the scripture. Every true catholic believes it damnable, to undervalue the scripture or to take from it, the authority given it by Jesus Christ. He pays it the respect, which is due to the word of God, and acknowledges, that if it is properly understood, and read with sentiments of humility and piety, it is capable of leading us to the truth, and of producing in our souls the most salutary effects. But at the same time, he knows (and experience has fully proved it) that the scripture of itself, is a dead letter, unable to explain its own meaning, that it may be made to speak any language, which suits the caprice or convenience of the reader, and that it has been profanely wrested by innovators and fanatics, to support doctrines the most impious and contradictory. The catholic, therefore, contends that Jesus Christ well knowing that the dead letter of the scripture, if left to every private person, to interpret it according to his own fancy, could never be an infallible guide to lead mankind to the knowledge of his divine truths, but on the contrary, an unavoidable source of contentions and divisions, was pleased to appoint his church to be the interpreter of his word, and the depository of all the sacred truths, which He had been sent by his heavenly father to reveal

to mankind. For this purpose, he has built his church on the pillar of truth, he has declared that the gates of hell, shall not prevail against it, and that he himself, and his holy spirit, teaching it all truth, shall remain with it until the end of the world. Such are the sentiments of every true catholic respecting the scripture. How people entertaining these sentiments of the holy scripture, can be deemed enemies to scripture, I am at a loss to determine. But thank heaven, we can shew both from the testimony of our dissenting brethren, and from the conduct of our church, that the charge is without foundation.

To you my dissenting brethren, who believe that the New Testament, contains the true and genuine word of God, that it contains the words of eternal life, that it points out to you the means, and the *only* means, by which you can be saved, to you I appeal, and confidently ask you, from whom did you receive those words of eternal life? You must either profess a profound ignorance of history, or candidly acknowledge that you received them from the catholic church. Luther the father of the reformation, in his Commentary on the xvi chapter of St. John's Gospel, says, "we are obliged to yield many things to the papists, that with them, is the word of God which we received from them, otherwise we should have known nothing at all about it." The following *questions* and *answers*, put down by archbishop Wake, in his Commentary on the Catechism of the Church of England, are also explicit on this point. "How do you know, what books were written by these persons the prophets, the apostles, and the evangelists? *Answer*. By the constant and universal testimony of both the Jewish, and Christian church, from the former, of whom we received the scriptures of the Old, from the latter, those of the New Testament.

What think you of the tradition of the church? *Answer.* Could I be sure, that any thing not contained in the scripture, came down by a certain uninterrupted tradition from the apostles, I should not except against it. *Nay I do therefore receive* the holy scriptures as the rule of my faith, because they have such a *tradition* to warrant me so to do. "I shall now quote a more recent authority, that of bishop Walker, of the Scottish episcopal communion, who, "in his serious expostulations with the Rev. Edward Craig, observes, "But, sir, we cannot afford to give up the church of Rome, as a part of the christian community. Even if you (Mr. Craig) should deem me an absolute papist, I will yet maintain, that her testimony (that of the church of Rome) is essential in the successive links of evidence, by which we ascertain the authority of the scripture, and make up with certainty, that faith once delivered to the saints. These are strong testimonies even of our adversaries, in favour of the catholic church, respecting the scripture, nor are they without foundation. Every one, that is acquainted with history, cannot, I presume, be ignorant of the unsettled state of the sacred (1) canon during the first ages of christianity, and of the doubts, that existed among some of the early christians, respecting the authenticity of some of the books, which were afterwards universally received as canonical, and of the partial acceptance, and subsequent rejection of others, that were ascertained to be counterfeit.

The books of the New Testament were written after the ascension of our Saviour, for various reasons and on various occasions. The gospels were written, to satisfy the laudable wishes of many of the faithful, who

(1) *Canon*, means a list of the inspired scriptures. *Canonical* the same as scriptural.

were desirous of being informed of the facts of our Saviour's life, and of having his admirable lessons impressed on their minds, and also to oppose and confute the wild conceptions of certain men, who either denied, or misrepresented some points of the doctrine, or some facts of our Saviour's life. The Acts of the Apostles, were written to record the first preaching of the gospel by the apostles, and the interesting events of the labours of St. Paul. The epistles were written for the further instruction of those, who had been converted to christianity, to strengthen them in the various duties of their new calling, and to guard them against false doctrine, which deceitful men were endeavouring to propagate. These writings, historical and moral, received at first a limited circulation, but were gradually, more and more diffused, and more and more read in the assemblies of the faithful. When the names of the authors were known, the authenticity or genuine character of their writings was admitted, but when the author was not known, or any doubt prevailed (as did in regard to the book of Revelations and the epistle to the Hebrews) some hesitation in admitting them as genuine, necessarily ensued.—

Besides the four genuine gospels of St. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the Acts of the Apostles by St. Luke, and the genuine epistles of the apostles, other writings appeared under the same names, that were either not genuine or authentic. As these several works appeared, the pastors of Christ's church, were in possession of an infallible rule, by which they could judge of the truth of the facts related in them, and of the soundness of their doctrine. For these pastors were either the apostles themselves, who had received their faith from the mouth of Christ, or the disciples or successors of the apostles, who were instructed by them in

all truth. When therefore the claim of inspiration was put forth in favour of any particular writing, they had only to compare its contents with what they already knew, that our Saviour and his apostles, had done and taught. If they found it to correspond, they pronounced it conformable to the truth; and if in addition, they could trace it to an author of acknowledged inspiration, they moreover pronounced it authentic, and part of the word of God. On the other hand, if it did not correspond with what they knew our Saviour and his apostles had done and taught, they rejected it as false; or, though it did correspond, if it could not be traced to an inspired author, they refused it a place among the inspired scriptures. The progress however, of these researches, was in some instances, only slow and deliberate. Hence the gospel was preached in several countries, and christian churches were established, long before the canon of the written gospel was settled, and used as a guide for the christian churches. This delay in settling the sacred canon, is thus satisfactorily accounted for, by Dr. Tomiline, the late protestant bishop of Winchester, in his Elements of Theology, *vol.* 1. *ch.* 1. "The persecutions under which the professors of christianity laboured, prevented for many centuries, any general assembly of christians, for the purpose of settling the canon of the scripture." Accordingly it was not until the end of the fourth century that the canon of the scripture was determined. In the year 397, a catholic council was held at Carthage at which the learned and pious St. Augustine assisted. In this council the canon of the scripture was fixed, and in fixing the canon, the pastors of the council were directed by the *very same rule of conformity* which the apostles and their disciples had followed. Those writings whose relations and doctrine this

council found to correspond with what they knew, our Saviour and his apostles had done and taught, and whose authors they could trace to have been inspired; THOSE WRITINGS this council received and sanctioned as of supernatural origin, and ranked them in the number of the books of the scripture. This council in its forty-seventh canon, under the title of canonical scriptures, gives us a list of the inspired writings exactly as they were enumerated by the council of Trent 1149 years afterwards (Labbe's councils, *tom.* ii. *p.* 1177, Binias, Caranza, &c.)

Thus you see, my dissenting brethren, that it was a catholic council, that first fixed the canon of the holy scriptures. This canon the catholic church has always carefully preserved, and handed down from generation to generation, as the sacred deposit of the written word of God, which was first delivered to her and it was from *her* hands, and no other source, my dissenting brethren, that *you* first received your scripture. Hence you see the correctness of Luther's candid acknowledgement "that had it not been for the papists, you would have known nothing about the word of God;" hence you see the meaning of Dr. Wake's observation "that he therefore receives the holy scriptures as a rule of his faith, because tradition warrants him to do so, although in all other cases he rejects tradition." And lastly you see the justness of bishop Walker's declaration, "that although you may call him an absolute papist, for so doing, still he must candidly acknowledge, that the testimony of the catholic church is essential in the successive links of evidence, by which we ascertain the authority of the scripture, and make up with certainty, *that* faith once delivered to the saints."

But not only the catholic church, but also her faithful children are and always have been anxious to

preserve and to hand down the sacred scripture. Hence many of her members, have spent a great portion of their time in either copying or translating the scripture. History bears testimony that the Monks dedicated a certain part of their time, in learning those languages which would enable them to read the written word of God in the original tongues, and prepare them for the important duty of copying or translating the sacred volumes for the benefit of mankind. Hence Gibbon a well known enemy of catholicity declares that a single monastery of Benedictine Monks, has contributed more to literature, than our two Universities of Oxford and Cambridge." Again who, I ask, published the Complutensian (2) polyglott? why a catholic cardinal. The Antwerpian polyglott? a catholic king. The Parisian polyglott? a catholic gentleman. The first editions of the Samaritan Pentateuch and of the Greek Testament, were given by catholics. The Greek, the Syriac, the Arabic, and the Æthiopian versions of the Bible, were first edited by catholics. And are we still to be told, that the catholic church is an enemy to the sacred scripture? she who first settled the canon of the sacred scriptures, she who has carefully preserved and handed down to posterity those sacred volumes, she whose members have been employed in transcribing or translating them for the good of mankind?

Yes, some one will perhaps reply; you are enemies to the scriptures, because you will not allow the people to read them. But, my dissenting brethren be not too hasty in condemning us on this point, and remember, that the scripture forbids you to bear false

(2) Polyglott means the scripture in various languages. The first is that of Complutum or Alcala begun in 1502, by Cardinal Ximenus. See Charles Butler's *Horæ Biblicæ, vol. 1. p. 90, et dein.*

witness against your neighbour. I can confidently assure you, that there neither is, nor ever was, in the catholic church a general law prohibiting the use of the scripture to the common people.

The catholic church, did indeed formerly require that her members, by way of preparation for the difficult and important task of reading and understanding the holy scriptures, should have received as much education as would enable them to read the sacred books in their original languages, or in the ancient and venerable Latin version, the fidelity of which she guarrantees to them; or in case, they were desirous of reading it in their own language, she demanded some attestation of their piety and docility, in order to prevent their turning (as St Peter declares, many did in his days, and as daily experience shews many thousands of Christians constantly do) this salutary food of souls, into a deadly poison. At present however the chief pastors have every where relaxed these disciplinary rules, and the modern translations of the whole scripture, are upon sale and open to every one, even in Italy itself, with the express approbation of the Roman Pontiff. In these islands, we have an English version of the Bible, in folio, in quarto, and in octavo forms, against which our opponents have no other objection to make, except that it is too literal, that is too faithful. That you may form a correct idea of the sentiments of our church on this subject, I will lay before you a rescript of Pope Pius VI., addressed to the learned Martini, archbishop of Turin, on his translation of the holy scriptures into Italian.

"Pope Pius the sixth.

Beloved Son, health and apostolical benediction. At a time that a vast number of bad books, which most grossly attack the catholic religion,

are circulated even among the unlearned, to the great destruction of souls. You judge exceedingly well, that the faithful should be excited to the reading of the holy scriptures; for these are most abundant sources, that ought to be left open *to every one*, to draw from them purity of morals and of doctrine, to eradicate the errors which are widely disseminated in these corrupt times. This you have seasonably accomplished, as you declare, by publishing the sacred writings in the language of your country, *suitable to every one's capacity;* especially when you shew, and set forth, that you have added explanatory notes, which being extracted from the holy fathers, preclude every possible danger of abuse. Thus you have not swerved, either from the laws of the congregation of the Index, nor from the constitution published on this subject by Benedict the XIV. In the mean time, as a token of our pontifical benevolence, receive our apostolical benediction, which to you we very affectionately impart. Given at Rome, on the calends of April, 1778, the fourth year of our Pontificate.

(Signed) Philip Buonamici, Latin Sec.

To our beloved Son, Anthony Martini of Turin."

Pope Pius VII, the immediate successor of Pope Pius VI, addressed a rescript on the 18th of April 1820, to the catholic bishops in England, earnestly exhorting them, to confirm the people committed to their spiritual care, in faith and good works; and for that purpose, to encourage the people to read books of pious instruction, and *particularly* the *holy scripture*, in translations approved by ecclesiastical authority, because to those who are well disposed, nothing can be more consoling, nor more animating than the reading of the sacred scriptures. When they are understood in their true sense, they serve to confirm the faith, to support the hope, and to inflame the charity

of the true christian. That the catholic bishops, approved of this rescript and carefully fulfilled its injunctions, is evident from the declaration published and signed by them in Great Britain, May 1820.

Their declaration is the following, "In England the catholic church is held out as an enemy to the reading and the circulating of the holy scriptures. Whereas the catholic church venerates the holy scriptures, as the written part of the word of God; she has in all ages, been the faithful guardian of this sacred deposit, she has ever laboured to preserve the integrity of these inspired writings, and the true sense, in which they have been universally understood, in all times, from the apostolic ages. She binds her Clergy to read and explain to the faithful on Sundays, the epistle or gospel of the day, or some other part of the divine law. As to translations of the holy scripture in modern languages, the catholic church, requires, that none should be put into the hands of the faithful, but such as are acknowledged by ecclesiastical authority to be accurate and conformable to the sense of the originals. There never was a general law of the catholic church prohibiting the reading of authorized translations of the scripture, but considering that many by their ignorance and evil dispositions have perverted the meaning of the sacred text to their own destruction, the catholic church, has thought it prudent, to make a regulation that the faithful, should be guided in this matter by the advice of their respective pastors."

Now my dissenting brethren, I appeal to your candour, and ask you, after this statement, whether you really believe, that the lower classes of catholics, are forbidden to read the scriptures? that the catholic church, will not allow the faithful, to read any editions and translations of the scripture, except those that are approved of by ecclesiastical authority, I most willingly

grant. Nor ought she to be blamed for this wise regulation, the object of which is, to preserve the integrity of the inspired writings and to put into the hands of the people, such translations and editions as are accurate, and conformable to the sense of the originals. For of what benefit would the scriptures be in the hands of the lower classes, unless they had faithful copies of the originals? would not false translations, and corrupted copies of the scripture, be rather an injury than a benefit to the people who would be unable to distinguish in them the word of God, from the word of man.

Fortunate would it have been, had the reformed churches adopted the same or a similar regulation to that of the catholic church, then, the world would not have abounded with so many incorrect translations of the word of God. When the scripture was declared to be the only rule of faith and obedience, it might have been expected, that those persons, who proposed such a rule, would have furnished the people with as accurate translations as they could. But did they do so? let us examine their own testimony on this point, and then our evidence will be stronger.

Luther was the first who put out a translation, which was immediately condemned by Osiander and Zuinglius. Of this translation Zuinglius says Luther was a foul corrupter and horrible falsifier of God's word. One who followed the Marcionites and Arians, that razed out such places of holy writ as were against him. Thou dost, says he to Luther, corrupt the word of God, thou art seen to be a manifest and common corrupter and perverter of the holy scriptures. How much are we ashamed of thee, who have hitherto esteemed thee. Luther soon had an opportunity of retaliating, upon his disciple Zuinglius, for the censure the latter, had cast upon his translations.

When Proscheverus, the Zuinglian printer of Zurich, sent him a copy of the Zuinglian translation, Luther rejected it, and sent it back to him, calling at the same time the Zuinglian divines, in matters of divinity, "fools, asses, antichrists, deceivers and of an ass-like understanding." Of the translation given by Œcolampadius and the divines of Basil, Beza says "that it is in many places wicked and altogether differing from the mind of the Holy Ghost." He also condemns the translation of Castilio, as being "sacrilegious, wicked, and heathenish."

We should naturally expect that Beza, after thus reproving the translations of Œcolampadius and Castilio, would himself have produced an immaculate one; but the learned Molineus observes of his translation, that "he actually changes the text" of which he gives several instances. In sua Translat. Nov. Testi. part 20. Castilio also wrote a *whole* book against Beza's corruptions, and yet he adds: "I will not note *all* his errors, for that would require *too large* a volume."

Of Calvin's translation, the learned Molineus thus speaks ib part 12. "Calvin in his *harmony*, makes the text of the Gospel to leap up and down, he uses violence to the letter of the Gospel, and besides this, adds to the text." Such is the account of the translations of the foreign reformers given among themselves, let us now turn to the translations of the English reformers. The character of the English protestant translations, until the year 1660. is thus described by De Israeli. "Our English Bibles were suffered to be so corrupted that no books ever swarmed with such innumerable errata (errors). These errata unquestionably were, in a great part, voluntary omissions, interpolated passages, and meanings, reformed and forged for certain purposes." In November

1822, the Irish society passed the following condemnatory resolution of the Irish translations. "Resolved that after a full enquiry the members of this society feel satisfied that material and very numerous errors exist in the version of the New Testament, edited by the British and Foreign Bible society." According to Mr. Platt, thirty-five variations were discovered in the first ten pages, of which seven were considered to be material. "This proportion in a Testament of four hundred pages, says, the Hon. and Rev. Mr. Percival, gives fourteen hundred variations and two hundred and eighty material errors in a single volume." The Monthly London Review for February, 1833, in speaking of the Pamphlet of Thomas Curtis, of Grove-house, Islington, on his discoveries of the falsification of the Bible says: "In this comparitively brief pamphlet, we find the exposition of one of the most singular deceptions to which the world has yet been exposed. The imposition is nothing short of a downright falsification of the text of Scripture. Need we add a syllable more to rouse the attention of the thinking community." The Review then proceeds to state the means by which Mr. Curtis was led to the discovery of the falsification of the sacred text. *First*, "Mr. Curtis's attention was called to the subject of errors in the Bible, by the accidental discovery of various discrepancies, which occurred in the copies, which were read in his family. He found it a good method of securing attention amongst them, to cause each in his family, and of his pupils, to read a verse or two in succession, and scarcely passed a single day, without his witnessing between the text in the modern university Bibles, and in those which had been for a long time in his possession, a very alarming amount of varience." *Secondly*, "Mr Curtis had very strong reasons to be discontented with the plan of publication,

on which the scriptures had been settled by government. He says, that the office of printing the Bible, was given as a *bonne bouche* to Mr. Reeves a barrister, and he, not being acquainted with the necessary art, actually farmed out to the highest bidder, at a certain rate per annum, *his* right to the printing of God's word. The printers, whom Mr. Curtis personally knew, were men of quite a second order in their trade, who employed their own workmen and stationer." *Thirdly,* Mr. Curtis obtained the knowledge of another singular fact, which threw still more light on the infamous system of printing the holy scriptures, which had so long prevailed. About twenty years ago, an intelligent reader, at one of the printing offices, where the Bible was in a course of printing, took the trouble of drawing up a specification of a number of gross errors, which he found in the very copy, that had been selected by the proper authorities, as the standard of correctness, to which he was to adhere. The errors pointed out by the penetrating reader, amounted to no less, than seven hundred and thirty-one, and these occured in the various chapters, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Jeremiah, the Review then gives some of these errors. We find in the same Review, page 220, "that in April 1832, a memorial was addressed on the subject, to the vice-chancellors of the universities of Cambridge and Oxford, and the other delegates of the Clarendon press. It was signed by the following gentlemen :—

J. Bennet, D. D.	J. Fletcher, D. D.
J. Blackburn,	E. Henderson,
George Collison,	J. P. Smith, D. D.
F. A. Cox, L. L. D.	J. Townley, D. D.
Thomas Curtis,	R. Winter, D. D.

The names attached to this memorial, are too respectable not to communicate a great degree of import-

ance to any statement to which they are affixed. This memorial states, "that the modern Bibles issued from the press of the university of Oxford, abounded with deviations from the authorized version of King James the I.—That though some of these errors were merely typographical, yet of those that were intentional, the number was of a serious amount—that in the book of Genesis, there were upwards of eight hundred errors; in the Psalms, six hundred, in the gospel of St. Matthew, four hundred and sixteen, and in about the fourth part of the Bible, an aggregate of two thousand nine hundred and thirty-one."

The authorities which I have quoted, are not catholic, but authors of different persuasions and of the first eminence. Of course they will for that reason, have greater weight with the public, and especially when they see them giving evidence against themselves. My intention for quoting them, was not to throw any disrespect on my dissenting brethren, but merely to shew them, from the testimony of many respectable persons of their own creed, that, the world, since the time of the reformation, has been bewildered with many erroneous, imperfect, and mistranslated Bibles, and it was to prevent these and similar false translations from falling into the hands of the faithful, that the catholic church has adopted the wise regulation, that the unlettered of her members, should read no copies or translations, except what she approved of as correct and conformable to the sense of the originals. But *those* translations, that are correct and conformable to the sense of the originals, she wishes to be dispersed through every village and cottage of the christian universe, and calls her ministers to unite with her in the distributing of them. Hence many of her catholic bishops in Great Britain, have been the instruments of distributing

two and three thousand copies of the scripture in their respective diocesses. For the catholic church considers it particularly fortunate and providential, that christianity (although it was established without the aid of the written word) should have its annals and its written doctrines, that the faithful should possess an authentic account of the first diffusion of their faith, and of the titles of their future expectations, that amidst the trophies of error and the monuments of incertitude and incredulity, truth also, should equally and still more have its trophies and its monuments, that while books without end or measure, attest the thoughts of men, there should be one at least to attest the thoughts of God, to bear testimony to a variety of facts and instructions, which powerfully help to enlighten the understanding, and to move the heart, to present to us truths the most sublime, and injunctions the most important, for the regulation of the church, for the order of society, and for the conduct and sanctification of individuals. In short she is perfectly sensible of the truth of St. Paul's observation. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, in order that the man of God may be made more perfect, and thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Such are the sentiments of the catholic church on the distribution of the scriptures. I hope what I have said, will convince every reasonable person, that the lower classes of catholics are allowed, and even exhorted to read correct translations of the written word of God, and that the catholic church has acted a wise part in restricting them to the perusal of such as *really* contain what the sacred Penman first delivered in those sacred volumes.

"Yes, some one will perhaps say, this is all very

plausible. You may pretend that you allow the people to read the scriptures, but you cannot deny that you do not allow the people to interpret them according to their own private interpretation.' My dissenting brethren, I must again beg of you not to condemn us, before you have heard our doctrine on this point, and *the grounds* of our doctrine on this point. If in explaining the scriptures the interpretation of an individual be not at variance with the tenets of the catholic church, the right of an individual to believe and to possess those interpretations, neither is, nor ever was disputed by the catholic church. But the case is different, when his private interpretation differs from that of the church, or when she speaks and decides; in that case, private judgment must yield to authority. This distinction between private judgment *as opposed to church authority, and not opposed to church authority*, I must beg of you to bear in mind, and you will find that the same distinction is admitted and acted upon with regard to the laws of England. Every Englishman is permitted to interpret the law of England in the sense he thinks proper, provided his interpretation be not at variance with legal authority, but if his interpretation be at variance with legal authority, and he act according to his own interpretation, then in the eye of the law, he is considered criminal, and punished according to the nature of his crime. And why? Because the nation has appointed lawyers, magistrates, and judges to be the interpreters of her law, wisely judging them to be the most fit persons, from their superior knowledge and experience, to understand the sense of her laws, and to administer accordingly justice to the people. Were the nation to adopt a different plan, what would be the consequences? Were our gracious and worthy sovereign to order a copy of the law of the land to be

presented to each individual, with an injunction, that every individual was to be the interpreter and judge of its signification, that no one had any right to restrict his opinion, or controul his decisions, but that every individual had liberty to examine the law and to regulate accordingly (without appealing to any tribunal) the whole of his conduct, and his respective claims to justice and property. Need I inform you what would be the consequence of such a regulation? Under its sanction every thing would become personal and individual, and every thing would become right, which each individual might think right. All order, justice, and regularity would be at an end, and England (which has been so long the admiration of Europe for her political regulations) would soon become a scene of confusion, anarchy, and revolution.

Now, my dissenting brethren, if you are not allowed to explain the law of the land as you think proper, but are obliged to sacrifice your judgment when it is at variance with that of those who are appointed to explain the law. Why, let me ask you, do you condemn the catholics for acting on the very same principle with regard to the law of God? If a person, who was summoned before the magistrates for misconduct, were to be found guilty, and he were to answer in his defence, that the magistrates had no business to condemn him, that he understood the law of the land as well as they, and had as much right to explain it as they had, and that although *their* interpretation of the law might differ from *his*, still they had no right to condemn him, because every Englishman was allowed to explain the law of the land as he pleased, and to regulate his conduct by his own explanation of the law. What would the magistrates think of such an individual? Would they not consider him either not in his senses, or guilty of

very great presumption, and inform him, that such ideas of the law of the land were highly preposterous, and very dangerous to the constitution. And yet this very principle, is admitted, approved of, and even acted upon, with regard to the law of God. Hence now-a-days, every individual, however simple, illiterate, or ignorant he may be, or whatever may be his rank, condition or circumstances, is allowed to interpret the scriptures (the law of God) as he pleases, and is permitted to form from it his religious tenets, however absurd, presumptuous, or contradictory they may be, whilst the catholic church, because she will not allow her members to act on so ridiculous a principle, is condemned as an enemy to the scripture, and represented as the tyrant of the religious tenets of her members.

I most willingly however grant, that it is not always correct, to judge of the ordinances of God, from those of men. Let us then see, what are the ordinances of God on this subject. Come my dissenting brethren, let us open the new Testament, and let us see, what the word of God says on the subject of private interpretation, *St. Peter* in his second epistle, *c.* 3. *v.* 16, informs us " that in the epistle of St. Paul, there are many things hard to be understood, which the unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, to their own destruction." Now, how can any man that depends entirely on his own private interpretation be certain he is not of this number? He may think he is not, but he can have no certainty. Nay, if he will only sincerely reflect, he cannot reasonably think that he is not of the number mentioned by the apostles ; for those who follow their own interpretation as their rule, are perpetually disagreeing among themselves, and giving contrary and often contradictory interpretations to the same text.

How then, can he reasonably think, that *his* private interpretation is right, when he hears it condemned by numbers of others, who think *themselves* as well qualified to understand, and interpret the scriptures as *himself*. How then, some one will perhaps ask, is he to know that he is right? What is to be his guide? Why, no other than that which our Saviour has appointed. Our Saviour knew, as well as St. Peter, that in the scriptures there are many things hard to be understood, which the unlearned, if left to their own private interpretation, would explain to their own destruction, and therefore He ordained his ministers to be the interpreters and teachers of his divine word, and ordered the people to be obedient to them, and to receive her divine doctrine from their mouths. Hence he declares that as he himself was sent by his heavenly father, to preach the gospel, *Luke c.* 4. *v.* 18, so he also sent his apostles, "As the father has sent me, I also send you." *John c.* 20. *v.* 21. For this purpose he revealed to them all divine truths, "All things, says he, whatsoever I have heard of my Father, I have made known to you." *John c.* 15, *v.* 15. After this he gave them a commission to teach the same to all nations, "Go ye says he, into the whole world, and preach the gospel to every creature." "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved, but he that believeth not, shall be damned." *Mark c.* 16, *v.* 15, 16. The same commission is repeated in *St. Matthew*, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, teaching them to observe all things, whatever I have commanded you, and behold I am with you, all days even to the consummation of the world." *c.* 28, *v.* 19, 20. When our Saviour gave this commission to his apostles, he at the same time, imposed on mankind a strict obligation to hear and learn his divine word from the apostles, well knowing a com-

mission to preach, and the obligation of hearing and learning were intimately connected, and that one was useless without the other. Hence he says to his apostles, "He that heareth you, heareth me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth me, and he that despiseth me, depiseth him that sent me." *Luke c.* 10. *v.* 16. "Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, going forth out of that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet, Amen I say to you it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha than for that city." *Matthew c.* 10, *v.* 14. But whilst our Saviour imposes on mankind, the necessity of hearing his apostles, he knew, that justice required he should pledge his infallible word, that they should never lead the people astray, nor teach any false doctrine. For this reason, he promises that he will send down his holy spirit upon the apostles, to teach them all truth, that he and his holy spirit, will remain with them for ever, teaching them all truth, and that the gates of hell shall not prevail against them. *John* 15. *Matthew* 16. From all these texts, it must be evident to every reasonable mind, that our Saviour appointed his apostles to be the ministers of his word. And gave them a power to preach and teach his doctrine to mankind; that he at the same time, commanded mankind to receive his doctrine from them, and denounced the most severe punishments against those, who despised or refused to listen to their instructions; that this obligation of submitting to their instructions, required that there should not be the least possibility of error, or deception to be apprehended from them; accordingly, the gates of hell will never be permitted to prevail against their instructions; the divine spirit is to preside over them, to teach them all truth; and their doctrine, always incorruptible, shall be perpetuated

from age to age, with the world for its boundaries and time for its duration. Such is the ordinance and command of our divine Legislature, *Jesus Christ.*

That this absolute, and infallible authority of preaching and teaching, was to be limited to the persons of the apostles, and to the period of their ministry, and was not to be extended to their successors and to future ages, is I know the opinion of many. Bnt if they would mark well the words by which the transmission of those powers, and the continuance of them, are forcibly delivered by our Saviour, and if they would consider the vigilance of the apostles in choosing faithful ministers to succeed them, I am sure they would soon cease, to entertain such an opinion. Our Saviour tells his apostles "that they are to go and teach all nations, and that he will be with them, even to the consummation of the world, and that the spirit of truth, shall remain with them *for ever.*" Now as the apostles did not teach all nations in their own persons, and were not to continue on earth till the end of the world, it is manifest, that the commission was not to be confined to *their persons,* but it was to be given to *their office,* that is, to them and their successors in office, who shall continue to the end of the world, and complete the work of teaching all nations, which the apostles first began. It was the apostles, therefore, in the first place, and those who were to succeed them in future ages, until the end of the world, that our Saviour appointed his ministers, his ambassadors, his representatives to continue and consummate his work. That this, was actually the intention of our divine Legislature, we learn in positive and distinct terms from the apostle St. Paul. The passage which I am going to quote, from his Epistle to the *Ephesians,* deserves particular attention. "And he gave some apostles, and some

prophets, and other some pastors, and doctors for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." "That henceforth we may be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the wickedness of men, by cunning craftiness, by which they lie in wait to deceive." *c.* 4, *v.* 11, and 14.

St. Paul, you see, here reveals to us, Jesus Christ's positive intention, in giving his apostles, and after them, succeeding ministers designated by the apostle under the name of pastors and doctors. The apostle assures us, that Jesus Christ has given us the ministry of the pastors. That being strengthened by their instructions, we may not float about in uncertainty, like children, who, when left to themselves, go as chance directs them, and that we may not be "tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine." Hence we see the apostles, careful and vigilant in appointing others to succeed them in the ministry of preaching and teaching. St. Paul ordained St. Timothy to be a pastor of the church, a successor of the apostles, and conjures him faithfully to discharge the duty of preaching. "I charge thee before God and Jesus Christ, who shall judge the living and the dead, by his coming and his kingdom: preach the word, be instant in season, out of season reprove, entreat, rebuke, with all patience and doctrine." ii. *Tim. c.* 4, *v.* 1, 2. He also orders the same Timothy to appoint others to succeed him in the same office of teaching. "The things, says he, which thou hast heard of me before many witnesses, the same commend to faithful men, who shall be fit to teach others also." ii. *Tim. c.* 2, *v.* 2. The same apostle also writes to Titus, "For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and shouldest ordain priests in every city, as I appointed

thee." *Titus c.* 1, *v.* 5. "Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets, and doctors, and as they were ministering to the Lord, and fasting, the Holy Ghost said to them, separate Saul and Barnabas for the work, whereof I have taken them, then they fasting and praying and imposing their hands over them sent them away, and they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews." *Acts c.* 13. But whilst the apostles, are careful to choose others to succeed them in the office of preaching and teaching, they at the same time are careful to inculcate to the people the same lessons of obedience to their pastors, which our Saviour had inculcated in their regard. Hence St. Paul says, "Obey your prelates, and be subject to them, for they watch, as being to render an account of your souls." *Heb. c.* 13, *v.* 17. On all these strong passages of scripture, the catholic church founds her right to restrict her members in a certain degree in the interpretation of the word of God. From these passages, she believes and teaches that the apostles were chosen by Jesus Christ to preach and teach his doctrine to mankind, that mankind were bound also to hear and receive the doctrines of the apostles, because they were sent by Almighty God for that purpose, she also believes and teaches, that the apostles were to be succeeded, by other ministers endowed with the same power of preaching and teaching, and that the people were also equally bound to hear them, and to be subject to them in all matters regarding faith, and lastly, she believes that this ordinance, was intended by our divine Saviour, to continue through all ages, to the end of the world. For these reasons, she requires her members, to receive their doctrine from her pastors, and to be subject to them in all matters regarding faith. She allows them indeed, to read and interpret the scrip-

tures, but if their private interpretation differs from that of the whole body of her pastors, she then, insists on them either renouncing those opinions, or ceasing to be her members.

Nor let any one suppose, that the interpretation of these pastors, is the private opinion of a few individuals, no, it is the unanimous opinion, of the great body of the pastors of our church, spread throughout the whole world; although these pastors are very numerous, and spread throughout all nations, and differ from each other, in their country, language, manners, government, and even in their opinions on other subjects, still with regard to *Articles of Faith*, they all teach one and the same *doctrine*, one and the same *truths;* and the method which these pastors observe in declaring these truths, is admirably calculated for preserving this unanimity of opinion. For when the pastors of our church declare any article of religion, they never declare it, as their own private opinion, or as what they believe on their own private judgment but they all protest, and declare that what they teach their people, is precisely the same without addition or diminution, which they received as the word of God from their forefathers. Their predecessors from whom they had learned these truths, declared the same, and pledged their salvation for the truth of this declaration and every preceeding generation did the same, till we arrive at the Apostles themselves. All the pastors in all ages assure us that they held it a damnable sin to add to or diminish one single tittle of the faith once delivered to the saints by Jesus Christ and his apostles. Does not this unanimity of opinion in so delicate a matter as religion in which experience shews how jealous men commonly are of their opinions, evidently shew that it must be the work of the Almighty? For what but an over-ruling providence

could keep such a multitude of men united in religion, who differ from each other in so many points? Now when all these pastors agree in giving us the same interpretation of the scripture, and in declaring to us any truth of religion, is it not infinitely more certain to follow their direction, than to trust to our own private judgments in opposition to theirs? Would not a man be considered very foolish, who should prefer his own interpretation of the civil law of the land, when it was opposed to the unanimous decisions of the whole body of lawyers and judges. Now my dissenting brethren, I ask you to tell me candidly, whether you think there is any thing unreasonable in this restriction, and regulation of our church, with regard to the interpretation of the scripture? You must acknowledge, that this regulation is sanctioned by the restrictions, that are imposed upon you with regard to the interpretation of the law of the land. And that it is also sanctioned in the strongest manner by innumerable and plain passages from the holy scriptures. Why then should you, any longer condemn our church for an ordinance, which is founded on the very principle, that is the support and pillar of the wise laws of our country; an ordinance, that is enforced in the most powerful and plainest manner in the word of God. Before I leave this subject, allow me to call your attention to what is passing around us. Whilst the *civil* law, admirably maintains its dominion over all people without distinction, and preserves peace and order through society, the *evangelical* law is abandoned to systems, opinions, nay even to the fanaticism of any individual, who chooses to erect himself into an expounder, and preacher of the gospel, and who possesses talent enough to gain a hearing and to procure an audience. Every where by the side of the established church, are to be found

rival churches, dissenting chapels, temples, strangers to one another, domestic meetings, where the gospel is explained in different ways, and doctrines expounded in different and contrary senses. In short, this country presents a confused medley of every sort, and every form of worship; a perfect chaos of doctrines, in which each one plunges and tosses, dogmatising and disclaiming as fancy or feeling direct. In consequence of this confusion of opinion men know not whom to listen to, what to believe, or what to do.

This confusion of religious opinions, and doctrines commenced with the reformation, and has continued and daily increased ever since. No sooner had, Luther the father of the reformation, set up private judgment as the interpreter of the sense of the scripture, than his disciples, proceeding on the same principles, undertook to prove from plain texts of the Bible that his own doctrine was erroneous, and that the reformation itself wanted reforming. Carlostad, Zuinglius, Œcolompadius, Muncer, and many more of his followers, wrote and preached against him, and against each other, with the utmost virulence, whilst each of them professed to ground his doctrine on the written word of God. Carlostad was Luther's first disciple of distinction, and declared against Luther in 1521. Zuinglius began the reformation in Switzerland some time after Luther began it in Germany, but taught such doctrine, that Luther termed him a Pagan, and despaired of his salvation. Œcolompadius was a Brigittine Friar of the monastry of St. Lawrence near Augsburgh, but soon quitted the cloister, and adopted the sentiments of Zuinglius, respecting the real presence, in preference to those of Luther. His death was sudden, and Luther asserted that he was strangled by the devil. Muncer was also the disciple of Luther, and founder of the Anabaptists. He

maintained that the property of the wicked belonged to the just, and wrote to several princes of Germany, requiring them to give up their possessions to him. He soon after marched at the head of forty-thousand of his followers to enforce this requisition. In vain did Luther claim a superiority over these and other of his disciples; in vain did he denounce hell fire against them, in vain did he threaten to turn back to the catholic religion. He had put the Bible, in each man's hands to explain it for himself. This principle his followers soon adopted and turned it against himself and each other, until their contradictions and discords, became so numerous and scandalous, as to overwhelm the thinking part of them with grief and confusion. Capito, minister of Strasburg writing to Farel, pastor of Geneva, says, "God has given me to understand, the mischief we have done, by our precipitancy in breaking with the pope, &c. The people say to us, I know enough of the gospel, I can read it for myself, I have no need of you." In the same tone, Dudith writes to his friend Beza, "Our people are carried away with every wind of doctrine. If you know, what their religion is to-day, you cannot tell, what it will be to-morrow. In what single point are those churches, which have declared war against the pope, agreed among themselves? There is not one point which is not held by some of them, as an article of faith, and by others, as an impiety." Calvin also writes to Melancthon as follows, "It is of great importance, that the divisions which subsist among us, should not be known to future ages; for nothing can be more ridiculous, than that we, who have broken off from the whole world, should have agreed so ill among ourselves, from the very beginning of the reformation." Thus you see that this variety and confusion of religious opinions and creeds, commenced

with the reformation, and took its origin from the principle, of each man being allowed to explain the scripture as he pleased. From that time, this principle has divided its followers into numberless sects, has multiplied error, and has taken away religious certainty. That this principle, has produced numberless sects, is evident from the history of the reformed churches; that it has multiplied error, is also equally certain; for all these sects, differ from each other, in points of doctrine, and consequently, since truth cannot be at variance with itself, they must among them, teach a variety of errors; and that this principle has taken away all religious certainty, is evident from the want of any rule or authority to determine between them. Suppose for example, that you search the scriptures for your own satisfaction, and that after a long and sincere enquiry, you make choice of one of the reformed creeds, in preference to the other, still what security can you have? Other men, as sincere as yourself, blessed with equal talents, and not inferior in judgment, have made a similar enquiry, and have come to quite an opposite result. What reason have you to believe, that you alone are right, and that they are wrong? But you will perhaps tell me, that this variety of opinion, is of no consequence, and that your differences, are not very material. I will suppose that you were to come to my chapel, for several Sundays, and I will also suppose, that the first Sunday, I told you that there was one God, and in this one God three persons; the next Sunday, I told you that there was no such thing as three persons in God, but that there was only one God. Another Sunday, I told you that Jesus Christ was really God, and really man, the following Sunday, I told you that he was no such thing as God, but he was only a mere man. On the fifth Sunday,

I told you that faith *alone* without good works, would save you. On the sixth, I told you that faith alone would not save you, and that it must be joined with good works. On the seventh Sunday, I told you that there were seven sacraments, on the eight, that there were only two sacraments, and on the ninth Sunday, I told you that there were no such thing, as either *seven* sacraments or *two*, but that there were no sacraments at all. What would you think of me? Why of course you would think and justly too, that my doctrine was not worthy of credit, and what would you think, if some of my congregation told you, that the differences I taught were not of much consequence, and that Jesus Christ, and the scripture, taught all these differences? Of course, you would conclude, that my congregation were not blessed with a very great share of common sense. Let any one enter the different places of worship in a town, and he will find, all the different points of doctrine which I have mentioned, are taught as the doctrine of Jesus Christ or of the scriptures. Now if you would not believe that these different points are the doctrine of Jesus Christ or of the scriptures, if you heard them taught by one man, will you be so good as to shew me how they became the doctrine of Jesus Christ, or of the scripture, by being taught in different places, and by different men. In my ideas, truth must be always the same, whether it is taught in one or different places, by one, or by different men. And of course as the doctrine of Jesus Christ, and the doctrine of the scripture. are the doctrine of truth, they must be always the same, whether they are taught in one or different places, by one or by different men. Let not any one imagine, that I have been induced by any unchristian feelings, towards the different sects of the present day, to speak on this subject No, for

all my dissenting brethren, I entertain the most sincere sentiments of charity, and my earnest wish is, that we may all see, and embrace the doctrine of Jesus Christ and his holy gospel, that united in the same faith, hope, and charity, we might form one and the same flock, and laying aside all mutual animosities, we may be joined in one common league for our king, our country, and our laws. My only object for speaking so strongly on private interpretation, was to shew you the folly of admitting it as a principle of religion, to shew you that as long as this principle is admitted and acted upon, there will never be any unity of faith, "but that men will be tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine." For as the poet justly remarks

> As long as words a different sense will bear,
> And each may be his own interpreter,
> Our airy faith, will no foundation find,
> The word's a weather cock, for every wind.

Nor let it be supposed that I wish to hint at the future destiny of any of the individuals of these sects. Respecting the future state of those, who have formed their creed in this manner, it is not for mortal man to determine. The great searcher of hearts is the only judge, to whom such judgments belong. I pass sentence of condemnation on no man, however remote he may be from the true faith, but hope that his opposition, is truly the effect of conviction, and that his conviction is not an obstinate adherence to opinions, which he might, and ought to have discovered to be erroneous. But at the same time, let me entreat every individual to remember, that his eternal interest is of far more value, than his temporal. "What will it avail a man, says our Saviour, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul." Let him therefore be sincere, in his search of the truth, let him beg of God

to give him grace to know the truth, and strength to embrace it, in spite of every opposition. Let him act in this manner, and there is no doubt, that in the end, he will find the truth. For our Saviour has said, "Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you."

By the observations, that I have made in these few pages, I have endeavoured to shew the public, in a short, and I hope plain manner, the real doctrine of the catholic church, respecting the scriptures. I have shewn, that the catholic church is by no means an enemy to the scriptures, but on the contrary, that she venerates them as the word of God, carefully preserves them as the sacred deposit first delivered to her, and has been the means by which they have been handed down to the present generation. I have also shewn the public, that the catholic church is most anxious that her members should read the scriptures, and urges her ministers to exhort the people often to read them, being sensible, that if the scriptures are properly understood, and read with proper dispositions, they are calculated to strengthen the faith, to increase the hope, and animate the charity of the christian; but at the same time, she is anxious that the faithful should have authentic copies of the scriptures, which contain the sense of the original, and therefore she orders her ministers to see that none, but what are approved by her as correct, are put into the hands of the people. For of what use is the scripture, unless it be a faithful copy, of what the sacred penman inspired by the Almighty, first delivered in the sacred volumes? And lastly, I have shewn, that although the catholic church puts a certain restriction on her members, with regard to the explanation of the scriptures, still it is a restriction which common sense dictates, it is a restriction

which is imposed on every Englishman with regard to the laws of his country, and it is a restriction which is strongly enjoined by the word of God. Such, my dissenting brethren, is the doctrine of the catholic church, respecting the scriptures; a doctrine very different from what you had imagined, and had been led to suppose was held by the catholic church on the written word of God; a doctrine, which if you will only be candid and sincere, you must acknowledge is founded on the dictates of common sense, and what is still more strong, on the very word of God itself.

I cannot refrain from making here a few remarks on the means which have been used to lower, and even debase the catholics in the estimation of the public. The first means is, misrepresentations and calumnious statements of our doctrine, the second (which is a natural consequence of the first) is misconceptions of our doctrine, and the third is, blaming the catholic religion for the vices of its members. I have often thought it strange, passing strange, but at the same time very hard, that in England, the catholics are not allowed the faculty of understanding their own belief. Of the thousands of declaimers against popery, with whom this island abounds, there is not one, who does not appear, to claim a more accurate knowledge of the catholic doctrine, than the very catholics themselves. It is in vain, that we disclaim the odious tenets, they impute to us; in vain that we appeal to our professions of faith, and to the testimony of our church. Our complaints are disregarded, and our protestations treated with contempt; the obstinacy of our adversaries will yield neither to argument nor authority, objections that have been a thousand times refuted, are again confidently brought forward, as demonstrations of our folly and impiety; and the misrepresentations of

prejudiced men, are eagerly received with the veneration due to simple unvarnished truth. You have often, I have no doubt, my dissenting brethren, heard or read with horror the long catalogue of crimes and abominations, which is branded upon us, by our *charitable* enemies. You have heard or read, the series of crimes of idolatry, and blasphemy, and sacrilege, and intolerance, and bigotry, and mummery, and superstition, and ignorance, and rebellion, and many other pretty words of this kind. You perhaps stood aghast, at the recital of these abominations, your blood boiled with indignation against the professors of such a horrid creed, and your zeal for religion, led you to hope, that the justice of the Almighty, would ere long overtake the monsters of such a creed. But my dissenting brethren, do you not know that abuse is no argument, declamation no evidence, accusation no verdict. Let people, first state our doctrine *fairly* and *correctly*, let them state, what we *really* believe and teach, and not what they *erroneously suppose* we *believe* and *teach;* let them do this, and then let them prove from our doctrine, that we are idolators, let them prove we are blasphemers, let them prove that popery is a monsterous compound of superstition, rebellion, and the revolting assemblage of anti-social, anti-christian, and anti-scriptural principles. Let them do this, then will I right heartily, join in the cry of "NO POPERY;" then will I exhort my congregation, to fly from it with abhorrence, and to hang out at their doors "NO POPERY," in large letters, as a caution to the unwary, and as a scare-crow to the papists. If the catholics can be proved to be rebels, blasphemers, enemies to society, to religion, and to scripture, then, in the name of justice, hold them up to public execration, brand them with infamy, scout them from society,

but not until it can be proved; no, I ask it in the name of justice, I ask it in the name of Englishmen. Were the abominable tenets, imputed to us, the *real* tenets of the catholic church, I would not be a catholic a single minute. Allow us however an equal (and we may modestly ask it) a superior knowledge of our religion to yourselves, and with this knowledge, we can confidently inform the public, that the countenance of the real doctrine of the catholic church, has been unjustly blackened, and its features, distorted by misrepresentations, and base and calumnious statements, and that a vast proportion of the people, are as little acquainted, with the real doctrine of the catholic church, as the vulgar are with the peculiar tenets of Mahomet and his followers. For the truth of this assertion, I need only appeal to the public on the subject, which has been the object of this pamphlet. Before you read this plain statement, how many of you, had been led to suppose, that the catholic church was an enemy to the scriptures, that she would not allow the people to read them, or even have them in their houses, but that she kept them locked up from the people in an unknown language. And yet you see, that these ideas are as different from our real doctrine on the scripture, as darkness is from light. Were you to examine our tenets on other points, you would also find, that what *we really* believe and teach, and what *you suppose* we believe and teach, is as different as the doctrine of Jesus Christ is from that of Satan.(3)

(3) Whoever wishes to become acquainted with the real tenets of the catholic church, need only read Dr. Milner's End of Religious Controversy, "or, bishop Hay's Sincere and Devout Christian." The character of Dr. Milner, both as a scholar, a divine, and a christian, is too well known to the public to need any comment. Bishop Hay was a native of Edinburgh, and was

But do not imagine, that I am blaming the generality of the public for this ignorance of our religion, or that I am any ways surprised at it. No, considering what has been the state of things, I cannot conceive how it could have been otherwise. For these misrepresentations and false statements of our doctrine, are often made by very respectable persons, and often delivered to the people, either from the pulpit, or in tracts, and books, which either are or profess to be written by learned men, and sincere members of society. Hearing these statements, and accusations made by persons, that either *know*, or *ought* to know the truth, and in places of worship, were nothing but the truth should be spoken, the people very naturally conclude, that all that is said against the poor benighted papists must be true. These misconceptions of our doctrine, are also formed or strengthened by the reading of novels and travels which are nearly all of them, filled with pretended descriptions of catholicity. As these books, are very numerous, and their narratives often entertaining, they are in the hands of almost every one, and are almost universally read. Although they are written by a set of men, who, in general, know no more of our religion, than so many children, men who have

descended from a branch of the noble house of Tweddale. He was brought up a protestant, and educated for the medical profession, and made rapid progress in his medical studies. At the age of twenty he became a catholic, and shortly after, dedicated himself to the ecclesiastical state. He died at Aquhorties near Aberdeen, on the 15th of October 1811, in the eighty-third year of his age, and forty-third of his episcopal dignity, highly esteemed for his talents and his worth. Whoever will read his Sincere and Devout Christian, or Dr. Milner's end of Religious Controversy, will there find the real doctrine of the catholic church, and he will also find that her doctrine is supported in the strongest manner by the word of God, and the dictates of common sense.

never given themselves the trouble to ascertain our *real* tenets, still these are another source, from which the people judge of our religion. The tales of these authors are received as so many truths, their misrepresentations as certainties, and their ridicule as wit. They are impressed on the minds of children by their parents, are taught the scholar by his master, and often become the subject of common conversation, and the sport and merriment of the leisure hour. Thus people naturally form from all these sources, misconceptions of our religion, and of course, imbibe prejudices against it. Few ever give themselves the trouble, to consult the proper sources of information, by which their misconceptions might be corrected, and their prejudices removed. Would they consult a catholic writer, or any well instructed catholic, they would find how grossly they have been mis-led by false misrepresentations and flaming exaggerations. But they never suspect (as they perhaps would do, were it their own case) that the statements may be false, or greatly exaggerated. Thus imposed upon by misconceptions, deceived by persons who are themselves the dupes of ignorance and prejudice, cheated by works which are the effusions of hostility, bigotry and interest, they live on, calmly and quietly, contented and secure, not indeed very attentive to the law of God, which says, "thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour," nor to the law of justice, "which commands them to listen to the accused, before they venture to condemn."

I cannot help relating here, a circumstance (I hope it is not foreign to the purpose) that happened to one of my acquaintance. He was travelling in a coach in which were three other respectable passengers. Among other subjects, the conversation (as is often the case)

turned on the catholics. One of the gentlemen, immediately commenced a philippic against the catholics, and called them idolators, superstitious, murderers, and many other pretty names. My acquaintance allowed the gentleman to pour out his abuse, for some time without interruption, and appeared much amused by his bold assertions and flaming descriptions of the poor deluded papists. During the conversation, a person in liquor rode up to the coach window, and began to annoy the passengers by his yells and impertinent behaviour. My acquaintance immediately said to the gentleman, who was telling such pretty things about the catholics, let us have this drunken man taken up, he has murdered two or three people. The gentleman replied "Are you Sir, *certain*, that he has murdered two or three people? can you prove it? Because it would be very unjust to take the man up, unless you could prove the crimes which you mention." No, answered my acquaintance, I am not certain. And let me ask you, if *you* are *certain*, that all the charges which *you* have just brought against the *catholics* are true? I am a catholic and must tell you, they are *false*, and if *you* would only follow the advice which you gave me about this man, you would find the truth of what I say. If *you* would not wish *me* to accuse this man of a crime, of which I am not certain he has committed. I beg, that *you*, for the future, will never accuse the catholics of charges which you cannot prove to be true, nay, which if you would only take the trouble to examine, you would find to be absolutely false. The gentleman looked much perplexed, and was so ashamed of himself, that he never spoke another word until they parted. The other two gentlemen enjoyed the joke wonderfully, and laughed most heartily.

The third means which has been employed to

injure us in the opinion of the public, is imputing to our religion the vices and irregularities of some of its members. This is a natural consequence of the false statements, which have been made against our religion, and of the misconceptions that have been formed of it. Imagining that our religion is a compound of all that is bad, and conceiving that it holds the most absurd and diabolical tenets, people naturally enough conclude, that its members must be a most curious set of beings, whose faculties are darkened, and vitiated, and capable of committing the most abominable crimes. Hence, if they see or hear of a catholic, committing any crime, or guilty of any misconduct, or irregularity; "Oh, they exclaim: it is no wonder, he is a papist." But my dissenting brethren, this is not correct reasoning, neither is it just in you to adopt it in our regard. If religion is to be judged by this criterion, I am afraid there will be few, yea none, that will not be found guilty before such a tribunal. For what sect is there in which all its members are spotless and without blemish? With regard to our religion, I candidly acknowledge, that there do exist among some of its members a variety of abuses, irregularities, and vices. Considering the immensity of our numbers, and the character and weakness of the human mind, good sense cannot suppose, that it can possibly be otherwise. Such evils are in the natural and even necessary course of human occurrences. "It is necessary that scandal come, but wo to the man by whom the scandal cometh." *Matt. c.* 18. *v.* 7. In the present state of our existence, we are obliged to take man, not as we would have him, but as we find him, formed by the hand of his all wise Creator, and as long as we remain in this land of exile, and trial, we shall find, that frailty and imperfection, will be our infallible portion, and sympathy, and compassion,

for the weaknesses and frailties of one another, the most becoming our fallen state. Does not the scripture tell us, that even the *just* man falls seven times? Does not even the great St. Paul, declare "that the good which he wished to do, that he did not, and the evil which he wished not to do, that he did? *Rom. c.* 7. *v.* 19. Does St. Peter not warn those, that think they stand to take heed lest they fall? Even amongst the twelve apostles, did not one deny our Saviour? did not another betray him? As long then, as we are in our fallen state, frailty and imperfection will be the necessary appendages of human nature. But whilst, I allow the existence of crime and disorders among some of the members of our church, I deny the inference, which you wish to draw from their existence. Those disorders are not the *effects* of the *catholic principles*, neither are they sanctioned by them, but, on the contrary, they are a *direct* violation of the law and precepts of the catholic church. *She* condemns as much as *you* do, those disorders, and warns her members of the serious consequence, if they persist in them, and do not wash them away by sincere repentance. Do not therefore, any longer condemn the catholic church, for those disorders in her members, which she herself highly condemns and laments, but which, considering the present state of man, she cannot prevent, but rather blame the weakness or perversity of her thoughtless members, and at the same time, remember that *you* are made of the same imperfect materials, and the apostle warns you that if you think you *stand*, you must take heed lest you *fall*.

Another method, which is similar to the one that I have just mentioned, is to go back to past ages, and to hold up to the present generation the faults

and errors of the people, who professed indeed to be catholics, but who, by their wicked conduct violated the commands and principles of the catholic church. To me it appears, that nothing can be more unreasonable, nothing more repugnant to every thing great and good in man, and more destructive of every principle of the gospel, than to fix on the present generation the crimes of individuals of past ages, who may have happened to have belonged to a religion or society, on which such individuals by their crimes brought disgrace. Penal codes oppressed the catholics, from the reign of Elizabeth, with little or no interruption down to the reign of George the III. No sensible person, can read without blushing for the honour of his country, and for the sake of humanity, the sanguinary code, which stood so long against us on the Statute Book. But would it be just, to condemn the present generation of protestants for that code, and argue from it that the present generation of protestants were cruel persecutors? No, you will reply, it would be the highest injustice, because it was we, who liberated you from that severe code. Yes my friends we humbly acknowledge, that it was you that liberated us from it. Your wisdom saw the injustice of such a code, and your good sense signed its death warrant, and may our hearts ever beat with gratitude towards you, for the generous liberation. And heaven forbid! that we should ever be so ungrateful and unjust, as to bully you with the existence of a code, in which, although it was inflicted by your protestant ancestors, *you* had no concern, and therefore can have no *blame*. In the same manner, let not the catholics of the present generation, be blamed for the wicked deeds of past ages, in which they had no concern, and therefore can have no blame.

But if people will go back to past ages, I would

like also to go back to past ages and relate to you the origin, the progress and consequences of the reformation. All my information should be taken from protestant writers, and of course, the truth of it could not then be called in question. I would then, give you the character of each of the reformers, drawn by each other, and leave you to judge, whether people of that description (as they are *really* described by *themselves*) did not stand in need of being reformed *themselves*, instead of pretending to reform *others*. But as this might perhaps appear inviduous to some, and unbecoming these pages, I shall refrain from it, and content myself at present with giving the opinions of some respectable protestants in favour of the catholic church. In writing against the Anabaptists, Luther, the father of the reformation, thus delivers himself: "Under the papacy are many good things; yea, every thing that is good in christianity, I say, moreover, that under the papacy is true christianity, even the very kernel of christianity."

The learned Hooker, in his Ecclesiastical Polity, observes, that "to the church of Rome, is no doubt, to be attributed a part of the house of God; and we gladly acknowledge them to be of the family of Jesus Christ."

And bishop White, in his Defence of his Way, p. 356, says, "I have never doubted the church of Rome to be the visible church of God, wherein our ancestors did profess the true faith, and were saved."

Doctor Barro, (*Sermon* 3.) "I dare not deny the name of christians to the romanists, the most learned protestants having owned the church of Rome to be the church of God."

"In the judgment" (says Dr. Some, in his Defence against Penry,) "of all learned men, and of all reformed churches, there is in popery, a church, a min-

istry, a true Christ. And if you think that all of the popish church are damned, you think absurdly, and dissent from the judgment of the learned protestants."

"Though I sincerely blame the imposing new articles on the faith of christians, yet I must, and do truly profess, that I find no position necessary to salvation prohibited, none destructive to salvation enjoined to be believed by the church of Rome; and therefore I must necessarily accept it for a true church, as in the church of England I have always known it accepted; seeing there can be no question made, but, that it continueth the same visible body, by the succession of bishops and laws, that was first founded by the apostles. There remains, therefore, in the present church of Rome, the profession of all the faith necessary for the salvation of all christians to believe, either in point of faith or manners."—Thorndyke, Epilogue, p. 146.

From Sir Edwyn Sandy's Relation of the Western Religions.—"Of all probable proofs, the catholic church testimony is the most probable. What madness, then, it is for any man to tire out his soul, and to waste away his spirits, in tracing out all the thorny paths of the controversies of these days, wherein to err is no less easy than dangerous! Why not rather betake himself to the right path of truth, where unto God and nature, reason and experience, do all give witness? That is, why not associate himself to that church whereunto the custody of this heavenly and supernatural truth hath been from heaven itself committed? Why not weigh discreetly which is the true church; and having once found it, why not receive faithfully and obediently what it delivers?" These words, it is true, are put into the mouth of the catholic by Sir Edwyn, but he does not even attempt to answer them. Sir Edwyn thus proceeds:—

"The catholic church was founded by the apostles, with the promise that the gates of hell should not prevail against it. It has continued on now, till the end of sixteen hundred years, with honourable and certain line, of near two hundred and forty Popes, successors of St. Peter,—both tyrants, traitors, pagans, and heretics, in vain wresting, raging, and undermining it. All the general councils that ever were in the world have approved and honoured it. God hath miraculously blessed it from above, so many learned doctors have enriched it with their writings, armies of saints have embellished it with their holiness, martyrs with their blood, virgins with their purity. Even at this day, amid the difficulties of unjust rebellions, and the unnatural revolts of her nearest children, she yet stretcheth out her arms to the utmost corners of the world, newly embracing whole nations into her bosom. In all opposite churches there are found inward dissensions and contrariety, change of opinions, uncertainty of revolutions, with robbing of churches, rebelling against governors, and confusion of order. In the catholic church there is undivided unity, resolutions unalterable, the most heavenly order, reaching from the height of all power to the lowest of all subjection; all with admirable harmony, and undefective correspondence, bending the same way to the effecting of the same purpose".

"Catholicity which has been this night the subject of so much abuse, has been the belief of the most extensive and enlightened nations in Europe, and of the most illustrious characters, that ever did honour to the name of man." Speech of Lord Hutchinson in the house of Lords, May 10th, 1805.

Are not these strong and honourable testimonies even of protestants in favour of the catholic religion?

But how much more forcibly would these writers have spoken, had they really seen the catholic religion in her true light. Do you, my dissenting brethren, wish to know, what the catholic religion *really* is? Attend and I will tell you in as few words as I can. Catholicity began with our Saviour, received her mission, her powers, and her doctrine, from Jesus Christ. She has been distinguished in every age, for the unity of her faith, and the sanctity of her doctrine, for the universality of her extent, and the apostolicity of her origin. No earthly consideration, could ever induce her, to swerve one iota, from the sacred deposit and unity of faith, delivered to her by Jesus Christ. Hence, when ever she found any in her communion, either layman, priest, or bishop, or even a whole nation, wishing to change, or add to, or diminish *one tittle* of the faith delivered by her heavenly Founder, she *at first*, like a tender mother, expostulated with them, appealed to the grounds and truth of her faith, and traced it to the mouth either of our Saviour or his apostles, but, if they disregarded her tender expostulations, she then, as St. Paul did the incestuous Corinthian, cut them off from her communion, and shewed them, when her faith was at stake, she feared neither the frowns of individuals, nor the strength of nations. Every article of her faith is so holy in itself, and so conducive to true holiness, that she challenges her greatest adversaries, to shew the smallest stain in any part of what she *really* teaches; and the most convincing proof, of their being unable to do so, is, that not daring to attack her *true* doctrine, they, by calumny and misrepresentation, lay things to her charge, which she detests and condemns. And then, after combating a phantom of their own creation, exult in an easy and decisive victory. From the dawn of christianity, to the present day, there

has not been a nation converted to christianity, but what was converted by her zealous exertions, nor is there a religion under the sun, except hers, that can prove that any of her members were ever honoured on account of their virtues, and sanctity, with the name of saints. She can look back through eighteen centuries, and shew, that the unity and sanctity of her doctrine, are the very same in the *nineteenth* century, as they were in the *first* century. She can trace a long succession of popes, even to the first pope, who was St. Peter. She can present you a long catalogue of learned and polite nations, of scholars, philosophers, and divines, of generals, statesmen, and princes, of saints, martyrs, and confessors, who looked upon her faith, as their best inheritance, a treasure which they held more dear than life itself. In short, she can prove, that she is *now* that church, which our Saviour first founded on a rock, against which, he promised, that the gates of hell should never prevail, and that He and his holy spirit, should remain with it, teaching it all truth, until the end of the world. Hence she has passed through the stormy trials of eighteen centuries, which would have long since, shivered any human institution into atoms, and now stands forth ever fresh and vigorous in all her pristine strength, but silvered with the venerable hoar of ages. This is a short sketch of the catholic religion. You may perhaps be tempted to call in question, the truth of this sketch. I say then to you, read and examine the proper sources of information, seek *sincerely*, and *with an earnest desire of finding the truth*, and *then, but not before*, question the truth of this sketch. Imitate the noble conduct of the Hon. and Rev. George Spencer, son of Lord Spencer, and brother of Lord Althorp. You will find at the end of this pamphlet, an account of his conversion *written by his own hand* in a letter to the author.

I cannot conclude without first drawing your attention to a few reflections, which often make a deep impression on my mind, and they may perhaps produce some on yours. You will acknowledge with me, I have no doubt, that death is the time, when men's prejudices often leave them, and when their passions begin to lose their strong hold of the soul. We then stand between our God, and an awful eternity, and the world and all its delusions begin to retire from our sight, and lose all their relish. Of course, we may naturally suppose, that truth and our real interest, will *then* have the greatest sway with us, and induce us to cling to, or embrace *that* which we are convinced is the most essential to our eternal welfare. Now my brethren, did you ever know or hear of any person, that had been brought up a catholic, and always attended his duties in the catholic church, ever send on his death-bed for any other minister but a catholic minister? I defy you to produce a single instance. On the other hand, did you ever know, or hear of people of other persuasions, sending for the catholic minister on their death-bed? If you ever go to Pickering, ask there, if any of the Clark's died catholics, and you will be informed, that two brothers, who had been methodists, and who had sometimes even preached among them, both at the point of death, sent for a catholic minister eighteen miles distant, and received the last rites of the catholic church, in the most edifying dispositions. Their mother also, although she was a singer in the Pickering church, sent for a catholic minister and died a catholic. I well remember her words to me, when I attended her. Some of the singers, she said, came the other night to enquire after me, and hoped, that I should soon be able to join them in the choir. But, Sir, I answered them, that I had always

professed to believe in my creed, in the holy catholic church. And for the future, if God spared me, my voice should never be heard in any other, and I would die in that church. Go also to Mickleby, and you will there learn, that Mr. John Cass, although during the whole of his life until his last sickness, he had always been quite against the catholic religion, still in his last illness sent for the catholic minister, and died a member of that church, although he had never been in a catholic place of worship in his life. I shall never forget his words to me when I first visited him. He told me he wished to die a catholic. I replied "Sir, you perhaps do not know what the catholic religion is, and therefore it would not be right in you to embrace it before you have had it explained to you, and you are convinced of its truth." "Sir, he answered, I have read sufficient about that religion to convince me, it is the religion of Jesus Christ, and in that, and in no other I wish to die." Go also to Gerrick, and enquire for the family of Huttons. About two years ago they lived near Guisborough: and they will tell you, that their father sent fourteen miles for a catholic minister, and died a catholic. He told the minister, who attended him, that he knew little or nothing about the catholic religion, and he had often heard it made game of, but still it had always been his sincere and fervent prayer to Almighty God, that he would give him his grace to know, and embrace the true religion, and that now, he could not be happy in his mind, unless he died in the catholic faith, which he now firmly believed, was the religion of Jesus Christ. These are only a few solitary instances, which have occured within the compass of my mission. But if you would go to any of the large towns, such as Leeds, York, Manchester, Liverpool, London, &c., and ask the catholic ministers, if they

were ever called to any other people, except those of their own persuasion, they would give you hundreds of instances.

You have often, I have no doubt, heard the catholic religion and its members ridiculed, for what people *are pleased* to say, we do, when we attend the sick. They will tell you "that we carry the sick, that we bury them before they are dead, and that we put a sod on them, and that they never rise more." Now my dissenting brethren, we do *none* of these things, but I will tell you, what we *really do*, and shew you, that both common sense, and the scripture, sanction what we *really do on those occasions*. When we are called to sick persons, who are considered dangerously ill, we endeavour to impress on their minds, a firm confidence in the merits and passion of *Jesus Christ*, that there is no other name by which they can be saved, and that they must not expect any spiritual assistance, except what flows to them *through the channel of Jesus Christ's death and passion*. We then inform them, that if they wish to find mercy and make their peace with God, they must be sorry for their past sins, because by them they have offended Almighty God, who is infinitely good in himself, and infinitely good to them, and because also by their sins, they have lost heaven and deserved hell. We also insist that for the future they would renounce their sins, and avoid also the occasion of them, and in short begin quite a new life, if they recover. We also declare to them, if they have injured any one, or stolen any thing from any one *of whatever persuasion he may be*, they must make satisfaction, as far as lies in their power, otherwise their sins will not be forgiven, and we moreover declare, that they must forgive sincerely from their hearts all, *of whatever persuasion*, that have ever offended or

injured them, otherwise they need not expect to find mercy with God, for he has declared, "with what measure we mete unto others, with the same measure it shall be meted to us again," and we also pray in the Lord's prayer, to the Almighty, to "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us." After we have impressed these sentiments on their mind, we then exhort them to make a sincere confession of their sins, in compliance with the injunctions of *St. James c. 5, v.* 16, "Confess therefore your sins one to another." But at the same time we inform them, that we merely *of ourselves* have no power to forgive sins, that we are poor sinners like themselves, and stand in need of the same spiritual assistances as they do.—But at the same time we shew them, that Almighty God can forgive sins, and that he gave this power to his apostles for the good of sinners, and that he wished the same power should continue with his ministers, for the benefit of poor sinners, until the end of the world. We shew them that our Saviour was both true God and true man, and that sometimes he acted as God, and sometimes as man. We then shew them, that our Saviour *as man,* had received from his heavenly father, a power *on earth* to forgive sins, and that he gave the same power to his apostles. Hence we see our Saviour in *St. Matthew c.* 9, *v.* 1, to 8, working a miracle to prove to the scribes, and to the people, that he, *as man,* had a power *on earth* to forgive sin. The people who had just denied that our Saviour had this power, were convinced by the miracle, that he really could *as man* forgive sins, and "glorified God who had given such power to men." Jesus Christ therefore even as man, was sent by his Father, with this power of forgiving sins, which he also conferred on his apostles.—Immediately after his resurrection our

Saviour, appeared to his apostles and said to them, "as the Father hath sent me, I also send you." *John c.* 20, *v.* 21, that is, with the same power, *that I, as Man,* am sent by my Father, I also send *you,* as my substitutes, as pastors of my church, and that there might be no doubt that the power of *forgiving sins* was included, he immediately "breathed upon them" and said "Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven, and whose sins, you shall retain, they are retained." *John c.* 20, *v.* 22. We then shew them, that as our Saviour, had given this power to his apostles for the good of mankind, during, their time, so he wished this power to continue in his church, until the end of the world for the benefit of all future ages, being perfectly sensible that there would be sinners *in after ages,* as well as in the time of the apostles. After we have convinced the sick of this power of forgiving sins, which our Saviour has left in his church for the good of his creatures, we then inform the sick, that if they are sincerely sorry for their sins, if they will resolve to live a better life for the future, if they forgive every one from their heart, and will make satisfaction for their sins, as far as is required of them, we will absolve them from their sins by means of that power, which is not our own power, but which *Jesus Christ,* has given to us for the benefit of his creatures, and which we exercise as his delegates or spiritual judges.(4)

(4) This doctrine with regard to confession and absolution, was always admitted to the time of the reformation, and may be found in the Protestant Prayer Book, even at the present day. It is ordained in the *Common Prayer Book,* that when the minister visits any sick person, the "latter should be moved to make a special confession of his sins; if he feels his conscience troubled with any weighty matter; after which confession, the priest shall absolve him, if he humbly and heartily desire it, after this sort:

Having thus absolved, in the name of Jesus Christ, the sick from their sins, we then proceed to administer to them (if they are considered dangerous) what we term *Extreme Unction* or the last anointing. This *Extreme Unction*, or the last anointing, is pointed out, in the plainest manner, in *St. Jame's* Epistles. In that epistle, it is said *c.* 5, *v.* 14. "Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the priests (or as

Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath left power to his church to absolve all sinners, who truly repent, and believe in him, of his great mercy, forgive thee thine offences; and by his authority committed to me, *I absolve thee from all thy sins*, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen." In the Church of England form of ordination, the bishop says to the candidate for the priesthood, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose sins ye forgive, they are forgiven them, whose sins ye retain, they are retained." This you see, is nothing else but catholic doctrine, confession and absolution are so plainly pointed out in the protestant Prayer Book, that no one can deny the fact, but with regard to the form of ordination, some are pleased to say, that the power that is then given, is not a *judicial*, but only a *declaratory* power, that is, the minister receives a power merely to *declare* that the penitent sinner is pardoned. Excuse me, however, for saying, that the evasion seems to be a very unsatisfactory one. For if it was really the case, where would be the difference, between the layman and minister? Any layman *without* any power of that kind, may confidently declare, that penitent sinners are pardoned. It is often objected, that man cannot forgive sins. I candidly acknowledge, that no man *by his own power*, can forgive sins. But then God can forgive sins, and he can and has (as I have shewn) given that power to man for the good of his fellow-creatures—If I were to tell you, that I had a power to condemn people to death, you would and justly too, deny my assertion—But if the King were to make me a judge, I should then have a power to condemn people to death for certain crimes —So in the same manner, man of himself has no power to forgive sins, but still Almighty God *can*, and *has* given him that power which he exercises in the name and with the power of Jesus Christ, delegated to his ministers: "whose sins ye shall forgive, they are forgiven."

your Bibles have it) the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil, in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him." Here you see, the apostle orders, that the ministers, are to pray over the sick, and to accompany their prayers with the anointing of oil in the name of the Lord, and he then, points out the effects of their prayer, accompanied with the anointing of oil in the name of the Lord. He tells us, that it will save the sick man, and it will save him two ways, first by raising up his body from sickness to health, if Almighty God judges the cure to be expedient, and in the next place, by forgiving him his sins. Now, when we are called to sick persons, we anoint their different senses with oil blessed by the bishop for that purpose, because the senses, are often the avenues, by which sin enters the soul. At the same time, we accompany this anointing, with a certain form of prayer, by which we beg of *Jesus Christ*, through the merits of his death and passion, to forgive the sick person any sins, which he may have committed, by means of any of those senses. Either before or after, this last anointing we also administer to the sick person the Holy Communion.

Now, my dissenting brethren, can you find any fault with what we do, on these occasions? you see we have the express sanction of the word of God for it, you profess to believe that word, why then should you condemn us, for acting according to it? Allow me also to ask you, why you are deprived of this last sacrament, which Jesus Christ has instituted both for the good of your bodies, and particularly for your souls. When any of you are sick, you wish to have the advice of a Doctor, and to have every *corporal* assistance. Why then, are you not equally anxious to

have every *spiritual* assistance for your souls, and why should you be deprived of that sacrament, or anointing, which the apostle tells you in the plainest manner, produces two wonderful effects, the forgiveness of sins, and the restoration of the body from sickness to health, if Almighty God sees expedient. Oh, ye poor (who are of different persuasions from myself, and whom I sincerely love for the sake of my Saviour) when I enter your hovels, where sickness, misery, and want, meet together, and witness the scenes of distress, that are passing there. When I see a few handfuls of dying embers, that are calculated rather to starve you, than afford you the necessary comforts of warmth, when I see the bed of wretchedness on which you cast your wearied limbs, when I view the tattered clothes, which scarcely cover you decently, much less protect you from the inclemency of the weather, when I behold your pale and sickly countenances, that bespeak the poorness and scarcity of your food, when I view your dear little children, begging in vain, with tears of artless innocence, a morsel of bread to satisfy the cravings of hunger, when I witness scenes of this description, (which are not very uncommon now-a-days) I think it very hard that amidst all these hardships, you should also be deprived of that salutary sacrament, which *Jesus Christ*, in his infinite goodness has instituted for your good and the good of every christian; my feelings and commiseration for your sufferings, carry me back to past ages of catholicity, and make me exclaim, that when you *lost the Catholic Church*, you lost a tender and compassionate mother, one who watched over you on the bed of sickness, and to whom it could never be imputed, *even by her bitterest enemies*, that she ever neglected your spiritual welfare in your last moments, and who is even so anxious for your spiritual welfare,

that she binds her ministers, under pain of being excluded from her ministry, to attend you, *even at the risk of their own lives, in the most infectious disorders.* Such are the considerations, that often make a deep impression on my mind and must make a deep impression on the mind of every thinking person. Before long our course in this world will end; the figure of this world is rapidly passing away. Here we are embarked in life's fragile vessel on the stormy ocean of the world; on one side, heaven is open to us, with all its joys, on the other, hell, with all its torments. But before we can reach either of these two eternal ports, we must pass two awful gulphs, death and judgment. To which of these two eternal ports are we directing our course? for to one of them, we are infallibly hastening. Our divine Saviour points out to us, in his gospel, the rudder, that is to direct our souls securely to the port of eternal happiness. "Now this is eternal life, says our Saviour to his Father, that they know thee, the only true God and *Jesus Christ*, whom thou hast sent." *St. John c.* 17. *v.* 3. And again, "if thou wilt enter into life keep the commandments." *St. Matt. c.* 19. *v.* 17. A true knowledge therefore of God, and of the truths which Jesus Christ really taught, (and not what men, directed by their private judgment, foolishly fancy our Saviour taught.) and the keeping of the commandments are the safe rudder, which is to steer safely the vessel of our souls through the awful gulphs of death and judgment, and bring them securely to the haven of eternal salvation. That every individual should sincerely seek, and really obtain this true knowledge of God, and of the real doctrine of Jesus Christ, and faithfully regulate his life according to that knowledge, and at last arrive at the haven of eternal salvation,

ought to be the sincere and earnest desire of every man, who has any regard for his future state

I must now, my good friends, take my leave of you, if I have said any thing in these pages, that may appear harsh or severe I am sorry for it, and most solemnly declare, that my intention was not to wound your feelings, but merely to state fairly the doctrines of the catholic church on the scripture, and to vindicate my religion. Throughout the whole of these pages, I have endeavoured to adhere to truth, sincerity, and charity, nor have I ever to my knowledge swerved from them. That you, and I, and every christian may entertain those sentiments of religion, which truth, sincerity, and charity dictate, and which we shall wish to have entertained *during life*, when *those awful moments* arrive, when the scenes of this world are fading fast away, death at hand, judgment nigh, and eternity beginning to dawn upon us, "in that undiscoverd country, from whose bourne no traveller ever returns," is the sincerest and most fervent wish of my heart.

APPENDIX.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE CONVERSION OF THE DUKE OF BRUNSWICK, TO THE CATHOLIC FAITH.

Anthony Ulrick, Duke of Brunswick, was born and educated in the Protestant religion, but he afterwards abjured that creed, and embraced the Catholic religion. The following is a short account extracted from the one written by himself:—

THOUGH for many years I had employed all the study, pains, and diligence I was able in an inquiry after the *true religion* and sanctifying faith, which I was sensible could be but one, and this upon no other motive than a concern for my eternal welfare, and a desire to know the truth; I was yet in doubt, out of so many religions and confessions, which it was that I ought to embrace. In the mean while, upon this design, I visited several universities; I turned over whole libraries; I read the works of innumerable authors, as well Catholics as others, that treated of our present controversies; I advised with a great many doctors touching the diversity of sects and confessions; I assisted at several public disputes upon these matters; I had private conversations with the heads of all opinions, sects, and confessions; I proposed my doubts not only to Catholics, but likewise to their adversaries; in a word, I tried all ways and means, without being able to find out the only thing I desired. This made me resolve to set all other business aside, and to chuse a proper time and place, wherein I might wholly apply myself to this affair, as being of all others the most important, because nothing less than an eternity of happiness or misery depended on it. But that this inquiry might be to good effect, and carry me to the thing I aimed at, I thought it was best to enter upon it in the manner following.

1*st*. I earnestly implored the aid and grace of the Holy Ghost, and with all my power begged the light of a true faith of God,

the Father of lights who *lighteth every man that cometh into the world.* John i. 9. For faith is a singular gift of God, whereby man is enlightened firmly to believe all that God has revealed.

2*dly.* I made a strong resolution, by the grace of God to avoid sin, well knowing, that, *Wisdom will not enter into a corrupted soul, nor dwell in a body subject to sin.* Wisdom i. 4. And I am convinced, and was so then, that the reason why so many are ignorant of the true faith, and do not embrace it, is because they are plunged into several vices, and particularly into carnal sins.

3*dly.* I renounced all manner of prejudice, which inclines men more to one religion than to another, whatever they were, which I might unhappily have formerly espoused; and I brought myself to a perfect indifferency, so as to be ready to embrace which-soever the grace of the Holy Ghost and the light of reason should point out to me, without any regard to the advantages and inconveniences that might attend it in this world.

In fine, I entered upon this deliberation, and this choice in the manner I should wish to have done it at the hour of my death, and in a full conviction, that at the day of judgment I must give an account to God, why I followed this religion preferable to all the rest. Being thus disposed, I resolved absolutely to reject any wherein I discovered the least error in points of faith. For *the Church of the living God is*, and ought to be, *the pillar and ground of truth.* 2 Tim. iii. 5.

Upon these principles and rules of prudence, I began the following considerations, which discovered to me many convincing motives, why I should rather choose and embrace the Roman Catholic Faith, than any of those sects into which the christian world stands now divided, and at last determined me absolutely to reject them all.

(The Duke then gives fifty reasons, which induced him to embrace the Roman Catholic religion before any other; I have inserted only twenty, because the limits of this pamphlet would not allow me to insert them all. The following twenty, however, I think are sufficient to convince every sensible mind, that the Duke did not take the step rashly and without mature deliberation.)

Upon calling to mind those words in Deuteronomy, xxxii. 7. *Ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee;* and those in the Proverbs, xxii. 28. *Remove not the ancient land-mark, which thy fathers have set;* I consulted the writings of the ancient fathers, to find what they would advise me

to do; whether to embrace the Roman Catholic Faith, or some of the other persuasions. The first I met with was St. Augustin, who of a Manichean became a Roman Catholic, and has left us the motives of his conversion, in these words. "There are many things which must justly hold me in the communion of the Catholic Church: the agreement of people and nations holds me: authority begun with miracles, nourished with hope, increased with charity, confirmed by antiquity holds me: a succession of bishops descending from the See of St. Peter, to whom Christ after his resurrection committed his flock, to the present episcopacy, holds me." Contr. Ep. fund. cap. 4. The second was St. Ireneus, more ancient than St. Augustin, who speaking of the Roman Church, Lib. III. c. iii. says, that "to this church, by reason of its greater power, it is necessary that all Churches have recourse; that is the faithful on all sides." The third was Tertulian, De præscrip, c. xxxvi. "Happy, says he, is the church in her state, for which the apostles poured forth all their doctrines together with their blood." The fourth, St. Jerome; Ep. III. cont. Ruffin. cap. iv. "Know, says he, that the Roman faith is warranted by Paul's authority." And Dial. ultimo cont. Lucifer. in another place. "To speak my opinion clear and in a few words, it is this, that we must continue in that church which was founded by the apostles, and remains to this day;" where he is speaking of the Roman Church. In fine, St. Gregory Nazianzen, in the poem he wrote on his own life, gives this answer to my question. "The Roman Faith was right in times past, and even now it continues to be right, uniting in an amiable knot all that the sun sees in his course." Having heard these evidences, I could not but yield to the judgment of those wise and holy fathers, and so resolved to embrace the Roman Catholic Faith.

I appealed to the other saints of God, and asked them what was the faith they lived in, and by which they arrived at eternal bliss: and they all made answer, it was the Roman Faith. Thus I was answered among the bishops by St. Martin, St. Nicholas, St. Athanasius and many others; among the religious, by St. Dominic, St. Francis, &c. among the widows, by St. Monica, St. Bridget, St. Elizabeth, &c.; among the virgins, by St. Agatha, St. Lucy, St. Agnes, St. Catherine, &c.; from whence I drew this conclusion: These saints, by following this faith, obtained eternal glory; this faith then must doubtless be the surest and safest way to heaven: it is therefore to no purpose to seek another.

Then I turned to the holy martyrs, and inquired what faith it

was for the truth of which they spilt their blood, and so patiently endured banishments, prisons, and all the most cruel torments? They answered me, as with one voice, that this faith was no other than the Roman Catholic. This I was assured of by thirty-three bishops of Rome, who were crowned with martyrdom: by the saints Cyprian, Sebastian, Laurence; by St. Agatha, St. Cecily, St. Dorothy, St. Barbara, and an infinite number of other saints. Then I wound up my argument in this manner: It is a natural impossibility for that faith to be false, in defence of which such an army of witnesses have so gloriously, so readily, and so willingly given their lives. How could I therefore any longer doubt of the truth of the Roman Catholic Faith?

No man can doubt, if St. Paul's faith was truly apostolical. Now this was no other than the Roman, as himself testifies in his epistle to the christians of Rome. Rom. i. 11, 12. *I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual grace to comfort you, that is, to be comforted together with you, by the mutual faith both of you and me.* Therefore the Roman faith was truly the apostolical faith. That it was so in the beginning our adversaries very easily grant us; but they pretend, though without proof, that afterwards it ceased to be the true and apostolical, which the Roman Catholics absolutely deny. For if any one ask them, in what points, where and when the faith of the Church of Rome decayed, they are at a loss for an answer; and yet it lies upon them to prove it. Indeed, did we but put the case, that a certain family was owned by all the world to have been in ancient times of a noble race, and that some one should now maintain that of late it had lost its rank, which he grants it formerly possessed, would not such a man be obliged to point out the time *when*, and to bring a reason *why* it lost its nobility? And if he could not prove it, would not any equitable judge condemn him as a slanderer?

I read over and over again, with all possible attention, several historians, as well political, as ecclesiastical, as likewise the annals of a great many nations, to find, if, before the fifteenth century, there was any were mention made of the Lutheran or Calvinist doctrine, or of the other sects of these our days. For the same end, I likewise perused a great many ancient writings and records of the memorable transactions that happened in each century, but without finding the least mark or vestige of them. This made me conclude that these religions were all new, and consequently far short of being apostolical; since they were not left to us by our Saviour, nor by his apostles.

Next I took into consideration the marks of the true Church of Christ, viz. that it is *One, Holy, Catholic,* and *Apostolical:* but not one of them could I find in those reformed churches. As for *unity,* their adherents are at variance upon several of the chief articles of faith; and even those of the same denomination run into sentiments and opinions directly opposite. They are no less strangers to *holiness,* which as David, Psal. xxxvii. 27. observes, directs us to *flee from evil, and do the thing that is good,* whereas these religions are so far from teaching us to decline evil by the observance of God's commandments; that on the contrary they declare it a thing impossible to observe them: and instead of exhorting us to well-doing, they teach us that good works (*a*) are no ways helpful towards the gaining of salvation, and, what is yet worse, they say that good works (*b*) are sins. Besides that, they cannot name so much as one person of sanctity that was of their religion. They are equally at a loss how to prove their Church *catholic* or *universal;* for their faith has never been spread throughout the world, as the Roman has, according to that of the apostle, Rom. x. 18. *Their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.* Add to this, that their religion cannot be

(*a*) An English Protestant may perhaps think, that the Duke charges the Protestants with opinions that they never held. For the Duke's vindication, I have here, and in another page, inserted references where these opinions may be found. I cannot help here adding an extract from the Edinburgh Review, October 1833, p. 80. which I hope is not foreign to the purpose. A few weeks previous to Roscoe's publishing his *life* and *Pontificate* of Leo X. in 1805, he writes thus to the Earl of St. Vincent: "I am well aware that my book will give satisfaction neither to the Catholics nor Protestants; yet of the two I apprehend most the displeasure of the latter. The former have been so accustomed to be abused, that they will receive with patience any tolerable degree of castigation, but the latter (the Protestants) who conceive their principles and conduct to be above all censure, will be surprised to find their early Leaders accused of a spirit of intolerance and uncharitableness, which has continued with but little diminution to the present day." See Edin. review, Oct. 1833, p. 80.

In the same manner, Protestants are equally unwilling to believe the absurd opinions which were held by their early Leaders, but if they would only consult the writings of these Leaders, they would find that these opinions were *really* held by them.

(*b*) Luther de Servo Arbitr. tom. 2. fol. 433. Si bonum operarentur propter regnum obtinendum, nunquam obtinerent.

Luth. Adv. Execra. Antich. tom. 2. fol. 110. In cap. 3. ad Gal. tom. 8. fol. 363. Condit. Ratio. tom. 2. fol. 26. De votis, fol. 281.

traced back through every age; for before the year 1517, it was no where spoken of. And at this day, it is not known over all the world, it has only been introduced in some few provinces of Europe, which is the smallest part of the universe, compared with Africa, Asia, and America, where it is so far from being established, that it is not so much as mentioned, excepting a few corners, where the sectaries have gained a settlement. In fine, it cannot be *apostolical*, because it was not founded by the apostles, nor is able to shew a continual succession of its pastors, from those first planters of the Church of Christ. On the other side, all these marks are shewed by all manner of proofs to be inherent in the Catholic Apostolic Roman Church. It was therefore with very just reason that I preferred it to all others.

Then I began to consider, how so many different nations, provinces, and whole kingdoms turned from heathenism to christianity: I found it was done after an admirable manner, and that such a conversion could never have been effected, without the divine power and assistance, by reason of the many obstacles on the part of powerful emperors, kings and tyrants, whose cruelty was to be undergone, and obstinacy to be surmounted; and chiefly by reason that the Christian faith recommended to them things contrary to flesh and blood, and to the maxims of the world, and proposed to their belief sublime and hidden mysteries, which the light of nature alone was not able to comprehend; and all this by preachers destitute of all human support. Upon a serious contemplation of these prodigious conversions, I began to think what that faith and religion was, and I soon discovered it to be the Catholic Apostolical Roman, which wrought these wonders by men of an apostolical spirit, sent by the chief bishops to preach the gospel. For our very adversaries confess, that during the first five ages, there was no other religion to which so many nations were converted. The sixth age saw England converted by St. Augustin, a monk, sent thither by St. Gregory, Pope. In the seventh, Germany embraced it by the preaching of St. Boniface, who received his mission from Pope Gregory, III. St. Cyril and St. Methodius converted Moravia in the eighth. In the ninth, Hungary and Poland were converted by St. Adelbert, St. Philigrin and others. In the tenth, Bohemia and Muscovy; and long before this, Friezland by St. Boniface and St. Willibrord. In the eleventh, Pomerania by St. Bruno. In the twelfth, Livonia by St. Meinard, and Sweden, by Nicholas Breakspear, a native of England who was afterwards advanced to the See of Rome. In the two last ages a

vast number of provinces, as well in the East and West Indies, and a far greater tract of land than all Europe together, have been brought to the christian faith, which is no other than the Roman Catholic, and the number of converts thereto is daily on the increase. But after the strictest search I have been able to make, I have not found so much as one single Pagan nation, that has embraced Lutheranism or Calvinism, or any of our new sects. All their proselytes, as far as I can learn, are loose and debauched Catholics, who have not, in all appearance, any other motive for leaving the pale of the Roman Catholic Church, than sensual pleasures and worldly satisfactions. From these premises the most rational conclusion I was able to draw, was that the Catholic Apostolic Roman Religion ought to be chosen before any of our new sects.

The foregoing consideration carried me on to this farther remark: that God bestowed on all the apostles, and on all apostolical men, whom in former ages he chose and sent for the conversion of countries and nations, the gift of extraordinary miracles, according to that promise recorded by St. Matthew, x. 7, 8. *Go*, said our Saviour to his disciples, *preach, heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils.* Of which promise we read the accomplishment, in St. Mark's last words. *And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.*

The master builders of our modern sects, may, as long as they please, boast their mission from God for the reforming of his Church; they have never yet produced any of the aforesaid signs, nor wrought a miracle in confirmation of their doctrine or their mission. How then could I believe that God had sent them, especially since our Saviour has forewarned us to *beware of false prophets, which come in sheep's clothing*, having always in their mouths the holy scripture and the gospel, *but inwardly they are ravenous wolves*, St. Matt. vii. 15. Which is still more evident from their clashing with one another, and preaching inconsistent doctrines, as Luther and Calvin did: it being impossible for both of them to have taught the truth, and consequently to have received from God a commission to reform his church, since the one gives no better proof than the other of his commission. For which reason I judged that neither of them was worthy to be believed.

I likewise took a view of the lives and manners of these first reformers; and I compared them with those apostolical men, who from Paganism brought the Gentiles to the Roman Catholic Faith.

And there appeared as great a disproportion betwixt them, as there is betwixt light and darkness, betwixt heaven and earth. Those apostolical men were persons of eminent devotion, were closely united to God, endued with many singular virtues, were pious, sober, humble and chaste; they despised the riches of the world, fled from pleasures, and had no other view than God's glory in the salvation of souls; as appears from the history of their lives, and from their writings. On the contrary, these pretended reformers were slaves to their passions and broached doctrines, that flattered sense to a most shameful degree, they have written in such a manner that their very followers are now ashamed of them. (*c*)

I read several authors, who had written against the Roman Catholic religion, and I could not but take notice, how in all their arguments they labour to prove, what Catholics do not deny, but on the contrary allow without any difficulty. But they hardly touch upon those points which Catholics hold for articles of faith. For instance, they will bring you a multitude of texts from scripture, to prove that God only is to be adored, and honoured with divine worship: when Catholics are so far from denying it, that they believe it to be a sin of idolatry to pay divine worship to any creature whatever. Again they cite many places in scripture, which make honourable mention of marriage. But what is all this to the purpose? Catholics condemn not marriage; so far from it, that they place it in the number of sacraments. Their doctrine in this particular, amounts to no more than what St. Paul taught them, 1 Cor. vii. 38. that *he that giveth his virgin in marriage, doth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage, doth better.* Again they speak much of our Saviour's merits, and of the satisfaction he has offered for our sins. Very good. But what then? Do not Catholics likewise teach that our Saviour's merits are of infinite value, and that his satisfaction suffices for the sins of the whole world? Must this hinder them from giving ear to the advice of St Peter, 2 Epis.

(*c*) Luther cont. Reg. Angliæ tom. 3. fol. 344. Resp. ad Reg. Angl. fol 498. Advers. Execrab. fol. 93, 109. Episc. fol. 305.

Calvin Tract. de Reform. Eccl. Opusc. p. 781. Epis. ad Melan. p. 108.

Adver. Pap. 107. fol. 451. Serm. de Matr. l. 5. fol. 119. In 1 Cor. 7. tom. 5. fol. 111, 112.

Instit. l. 2. c. 14 n. 3. in cap. 17. Jo. v. 12. In c. 3. ad. Gal. Instit. l. 1. c. 13. n. 9. 23, 24. l. 2. c. 16. n. 12. l. c. 14 n. 3.

i. 10. *Brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure by good works.* Or to that of St. Paul, Rom. viii. 17. *If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him.* They give us great encomiums of faith. And so do the Catholics. But may they not believe St. James, when he says, James ii. 24. *Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only:* or St. Paul, when he pronounces of himself. 1 Cor. xiii. 2. *Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.* In fine, our adversaries inveigh most bitterly against the dissolute lives of some of the clergy. But how does this better their cause? Catholics detest it as much as they: but then they admire in the generality of them that angelical chastity which they preserve both in body and soul.

I observed not only in these authors, but likewise in the sermons and discourses, both public and private, of other ministers, that their main talent lay in slandering and blackening the Roman Catholic Church. And this alone was enough to persuade me, they were but ill provided with arguments against her. For when men in the heat of their disputes fling dirt at their adversaries, it is a certain sign their arguments want an edge. Yet this is the very case of the sectaries. For instance, they will have the world to believe, that Catholics adore the saints; that they take the Pope for a God; that they put their hope and confidence more in their own merits, and in those of the saints, than in the merits of our Saviour Jesus Christ; and a thousand other stories, without any foundation, but pure malice, to support them. Now I could not think it rational to ground my faith on false statements; and for that reason I resolved to inform myself of the truth of things; and having happily found it, I rejected all these new sects as unworthy of my belief.

I remember, that being once present in my youth, at a dispute of school divinity, which was held among the Calvinists, one of the audience, more knowing than the rest, proposed before all the company, in the person of a Catholic, an argument which so perplexed the professor, that it quite silenced him for a time. Then to get clear of it, as well as he could, he told us, that, being formerly in England, he had proposed the same difficulty to one of their doctors, who had no other answer to give him than that no proper solution could be made to the argument, and by consequence that in this point no direct answer was to be given to catholics, but the only way was to avoid the force of it, by some

logical evasion. This answer did not a little scandalize me: for it is not by evasions that satisfaction can be given to any argument, nor that the knowledge of any truth can be acquired. So that I judged the sectaries took not much to heart the truth of matters, concerning articles of faith.

I observed likewise another particular, which gave me a most violent presumption of the falsity of all the sects that have separated from the Roman Catholic Church. Though they continually refer Catholics to the holy scripture; as for themselves, they treat it as they think fit. Sometimes they reject whole books of it, at other times they dress it out in a false *(d)* translation, and all of them expound it to their own fancies, and make it chime to the suggestions of their private spirit. On the contrary, the Roman Catholics have all the same version, all make use of the same books, which the church has used for above thirteen hundred years; and they understand them not according to their own private lights, but according to the sense of the ancient fathers, and of the universal church, to which our blessed Saviour refers us in these words, *If he neglects to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen and a publican.* Matt. xviii. 17.

That nothing might pass me without being examined, I attentively perused Luther's little Catechism, which the Lutherans of Hungary make use of to this day. I carefully compared it with the Catechism of the same Luther, printed at Wittemberg, in 1567, and I found that in several articles it differed as much as could be from the first edition of the same Catechism, printed at Wittemberg. I should never have imagined so great an alteration, had I not remarked how the pretended reformers of our days alter, as the fancy takes them, the articles of their religion; so that some are held in some countries, which are denied in others; some stifled in this age, which were broached in the last; and others broached in this, which were not so much as dreamt of in the last. If any man questions what I say concerning these two Catechisms, I desire he would compare them, which may easily be done, since the Catechism of Wittemberg was reprinted in 1701, at Tirnau, in Hungary. On the contrary, in my travels through several Catholic provinces, I found no difference among them, as to articles of faith, but rather an exact conformity.

(d) Concerning false translations in the English Bible, see a Book called, The true Church of Christ, part i. p. 137. And, Ward's Errata to the Protestant Bible.

Having therefore met with so unaccountable a variety, as to matters of faith, among those that would be thought to follow the Augsburg Confession, (*e*) I resolved to read it with all possible attention. I procured several editions, and those of different times, but I found them so altered and inconsistent, that I was not able to discover which of them was the genuine; and no wonder, since the very professors of Lutheran universities are at variance about the matter. I laboured under this uncertainty till I had the good fortune, when at Vienna, to be admitted one day with a great many more into the emperor's library. There, among other rarities, his Imperial Majesty's library-keeper shewed us the very original of that Confession, which Melancthon in 1530, presented to Charles V. at the Diet of Augsburgh. It is so different from the other editions, that did they not bear the title, no man would take them for the Confession of Augsburg. From whence I infer that the religion of our Lutherans is not that of the Augsburg Confession, but very different from it, and consequently not worthy to be regarded. But why was I not contented at least with the original itself? Because it contained a great many palpable contradictions, as Cardinal Pazman hath clearly proved in his learned work, called *Kasauz*, from page 415 to 440.

For the more perfect discovery of the truth I sought after, I resolved to read the most celebrated authors of both parties, that I might be able to judge how far their doctrine agreed with that of the holy fathers of the primitive church, and whether in all points they agreed among themselves; and therefore I perused a great many books written by Roman Catholics of divers nations, as well Spaniards, Italians, Flanderkins, and English; as Germans, Polanders, and Hungarians; and the issue of this inquiry was, that I found a perfect harmony among them as to points of faith, and their deference to the ancient fathers. It was a matter of admiration to me that their schoolmen, who widely differed in opinion as to other subjects, should all as with one voice profess, maintain, and teach the very same as to what concerns the articles of faith. I observed the like in the writings of the ancient holy fathers, though they lived and writ in times and places very distant from one another, as Ignatius and Crysostome, at Antioch; Athanasius and Telesphorus, at Alexandria: Macarius and Cyril,

(*e*) In the year 1530, the Lutheran directors published their profession of faith, in twenty one articles, which is called the Confession of Augsburgh.

at Jerusalem; Proclus, at Constantinople; Gregory and Basil, in Cappadocia; Justin, at Athens; Dennis, at Corinth; Ephrem, in Syria; Cyprian, Optatus and Augustin, in Africa; Epiphannius, in Cyprus; Ambrose, in Italy; Irenæus, in France; Orosius and Isodore, in Spain; Bede, in England, &c. But when I came to confront the writings of our new reformers with the doctrine of the ancient fathers, I found them as opposite as east and west. In the next place I examined what harmony these sectarian writers kept among themselves, but I clearly discovered they differed very much about points of faith. It is not only the Lutherans that quarrel with the Calvinists, and the Calvinists with the Lutherans, and both of them with the Puritans, Arians, and Anabaptists; but even those of the same cloth are strangely at variance about their faith. The rigid Calvinists are of one persuasion, and the more moderate of another. The Remonstrants teach one thing, and the Anti-remonstrants teach the contrary. The Puritans maintain and teach what the Presbyterians will not allow; and as for the Lutherans, some things are held to be of faith at Witttemberg, others at Lantsberg, others in Sweden, others in Hungary others in Brandenburg, and others in England. Besides that the Lutherans follow in the age we now live in, a doctrine they were strangers to in the foregoing age. They taught and believed one thing at the beginning of Lutheranism, and another thing in its progress. What account then should I be able to give in the day of judgment, if to so many great lights of the church, I preferred a handful of inconsiderable men, who have neither their learning nor their virtue, and are over and above so divided among themselves? I therefore judged it best to set these all aside, and to keep to the fathers.

But though the holy fathers had been all silent, the very stones and remnants of antiquity spoke to me, attested and recommended the truth of the Roman Catholic faith. For upon taking into consideration the old churches, elections of kings and emperors, and the ceremonies used at their coronation, the ancient statutes of monarchs, the laws and customs of the most ancient universities, the conversion of nations to the faith of Christ, the inscriptions cut in marble, the histories and annals of all ages since the birth of our Redeemer; all the memorable facts that have happened since the first promulgation of the christian faith; the journals and calendars wherein are marked the illustrious actions of the saints, and the most solemn days of the year, which are still in use among the sectaries themselves, as the Sundays called

Quadragesima, Quinquagesima, Sexagesima, Septuagesima, Easter, Quasimodo, Jubilate, Cantate, Rogate, &c. All these things gave me clearly to understand that no other religion besides the Roman Catholic was ever firmly planted in the christian world; so that I had convincing reasons not to separate from antiquity, nor to adhere to any of these novelties that bear so fresh a date.

For the space of seventeen hundred years the Roman Catholic Church has been attacked by Pagans and Gentiles, by cruel tyrants, by Mahometans, by Schismatics and innumerable heresies, without being worsted; and to this day she defends herself courageously and invincibly in a visible and flourishing condition. Nay, she is daily on the increase, and extends her limits wider and wider. On the contrary, so many heresies, and of so many different sorts, which appeared formidable for strength and power, and extent, like so many rapid torrents, have perished, disappeared, and quite vanished away, as for instance, the heresies of the Manichees, the Donatists, the Pelagians, the Iconoclasts, and a great many more. Now what can I infer from hence, but that the Roman Catholic Church was built by Jesus Christ upon a rock, and that it was of her our Saviour prophesied when he said, St. Matt. xvi. 18. *The gates of hell shall not prevail against it*? But that all sects have been built by men upon sand, that the rain has fallen, the rivers have overflowed, and the winds have risen, that they came upon those sects and overturned them, and made strange havock? And I may add, that they destroyed themselves, and that those of latter growth will in time meet with the same fate, according to that principle of our blessed Saviour, St. Matt. xv. 13. *Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.* For these reasons I chose rather to take shelter in the house which was built upon a rock, than in that which was built on the sand, and threatened me with its approaching ruin.

What yet forwarded my conversion was the remark I had made, that no Catholic ever turned Protestant in order to reform his manners, and to live a better life, but merely out of a love for worldly liberty, and that he might indulge his passions without constraint; for I never saw any religious man or priest apostatize, that did not make it his first care to procure a wife. On the other side I observed, that those who from Protestants returned to the Roman Catholic faith, became devout and fervent, zealous and exemplary; and that very many of them renounced the world,

on purpose to dedicate themselves entirely to God in some religious state. *Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit: but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.* St. Matt. vii. 17.

I observed that many sectaries, who had seemed for many years to be fixed in their persuasion, were converted toward the end of their days, and desired to die in the Roman Catholic Faith. But never did I meet with any Catholic that wished to die in another religion. Now it is chiefly at the hour of death that the soul opens its eyes into a clearer prospect of things eternal. For my own part, I resolved to live, as I should wish to die, and for that reason I came to a resolution to embrace immediately the Catholic Faith; because death is as certain as its hour is uncertain.

Think not, my dear friends, that I rashly and inconsiderately abandoned the errors of your party, to embrace the Roman Catholic Religion, out of any prospect of worldly advantage. No, it was purely out of a concern for my salvation, and after mature deliberation that I did it, as you may judge from these motives.

And now I address myself to you, my once fellow-members in religion, and still my dear relations, friends and countrymen, and I conjure you by the five wounds of Jesus Christ, by his most precious blood, the price of our redemption, and by the concern you ought to have for the eternal welfare of your souls, not to quit a certain way to heaven for an uncertain. Consider seriously, what that faith was which your ancestors professed, and which the first Christian of your nation upon leaving Paganism embraced. Consider in what religion those great saints lived, whom you own for such. Weigh seriously these motives of my conversion, which I offer you with a heart that is full of a more sincere affection. Return to the way of your fathers, to the path of the saints, to the religion which has stood for so many ages, and been confirmed, maintained, and watered with the blood of so many martyrs; a religion which all the ancient fathers of the primitive church asserted and approved: a religion, against which, as our blessed Saviour has engaged his word, the gates of hell shall never prevail. Have always an eye to the salvation of your souls. *For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?* St. Matt. xvi. 26.

CONVERSION

OF THE

HON. AND REV. GEORGE SPENCER,

(Son of the present Lord Spencer, and Brother of Lord Althorp.)

The following account was given by the Nobleman himself, to the Author of this pamphlet, in a letter, dated January 3, 1834.

DEAR AND REV. SIR,

I WAS ordained Deacon in the Church of England about Christmas, 1822, being satisfied at the time, that all was right in that Church, although I had not taken much pains, to study the grounds and principles of its establishment. When I entered upon active employment as a Clergyman, I was naturally led to seek information more fully; I often used to read and admire the Church Liturgy, but often wondered, how such a beautiful work could have been produced in the midst of such confusion and wickedness, as I learned from Protestant Histories, had accompanied all the proceedings of the chief actors in the Reformation of England. I had been brought up in the habit of looking on the Catholic Church, as a mass of errors, and little did I think at that time, that all that I admired in the Church of England *(a)* Liturgy, was merely an inconsistant abridgment of the holy and admirable offices of the Roman Catholic Church. What first led to an alteration of my views in regard to the soundness, and excellence of the Church of England, was the intercourse, which I had with various Dissenting Protestant Ministers. I used to seek

(a) The advocates of the established Church, often extol the beauty and perfection of their Liturgy, but they ought, at the same time, to be so kind as to inform the Public, that the greatest part of their Liturgy has been borrowed from the Catholic Missal and Ritual. Of this, any one may be convinced, who will compare the prayers, lessons and gospels in the Catholic Missal and Ritual, with those in the Book of Common Prayer. But though our service has been thus borrowed, it has not been preserved entire, but stands in the Protestant prayer book, deprived of the principal and essential worship of all the ancient Churches, the Holy Mass, this true and propitiatory sacrifice, as it stands in all the ancient Missals, has been reduced in the Book of Common Prayer to a mere verbal worship in " The order for the Morning Prayer." Hence our James I. pronounced the order for the Morning Prayer to be an ill said Mass.

their conversation with the hope of leading back some of them, and their flocks to the Church, with which I was satisfied, and which I did not think, they could have any good reason for leaving; but every sect, with which I became acquainted, seemed to have something apparently reasonable to say in behalf of their own views, and against the established Church. I knew of course these sects could not be all right in their contradictory doctrines and rules of practices, and I clearly saw palpable errors in their several systems, but at the same time, I learned from their conversation, that I could not defend every part of my own system: and I also found, that, these ministers could bring arguments against it, which I could not satisfactorily answer. At length, I found a difficulty regarding the thirty-nine articles which made me see, that I could not rest as I was. In signing those articles, my assent was required to certain declarations of doctrines, *expressly* on the ground, that they could be proved by most certain warrant of the Holy Scripture, and indeed Protestants hold it as a general principle, that the "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary for salvation, so that whatsoever is not contained therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought necessary as requisite for salvation." Now with the doctrines in question, I found no fault, but I could not draw a clear and satisfactory demonstration of them from the Scripture *alone*; in order to establish them, I found myself obliged to have recourse to arguments from reason, independent of the Scriptures, or to appeal to the general consent of christians in successive ages, in other words, to the tradition of the Church. I felt I could not again sign the thirty-nine articles, unless this objection were removed. I proposed it to my superiors, but, as the explanation given by them, did not satisfy me, after what I considered a sufficient pause, I declared finally my resolution of not signing them any more. I was now the more free to seek the truth, where it might be found, but I had then no idea, that it was in the Church of Rome. My friends would have dissuaded me, from having any communication with Roman Catholic Priests, but I thought they ought not to be excluded, from the general scheme of re-union, which I wished to see set on foot, I used therefore to speak to them frequently. At first I expected to find them ignorant of true spiritual religion, mere formalists, and quite unable to defend, what I thought the absurdities of their creed, but to my surprise, every conversation with them, led me to see that I had been deceived, I found that they both understood the tenets of

their Religion well, and could explain and defend them in a most masterly manner, and I began to see there was more in the Catholic Religion, than I knew, though I was not convinced, I was wrong, in being divided from it, as I still thought, it was erroneous and unscriptural in many points. The first thing which changed materially my views of the Catholic faith, was a correspondence, which I kept up with an unknown person for about half a year. This person stated, that he had been travelling abroad, and having frequently entered the Catholic Churches, and surprised to see how devout and holy the services were, he was led to examine further, and began to entertain doubts of the wisdom of the English reformation. I thought I could soon set him right by pointing out to him, what I had for some time, thought denunciations against the Catholic Church, in the Apocalypse, and in other parts of the Scripture. In the course of our correspondence he forcibly opposed those ideas, and so far from allowing that they could be proved from scripture, he treated them as the mere inventions of men. I was then led to ask myself, whether I had drawn them simply from scripture, and found, that I had never entertained them, before some Protestant Commentators had put them into my head. My principle was to attend to the word of God alone, I therefore determined no longer to pay regard to those ideas, unless I should find the scripture of itself lead me to them. From that time, those ideas never made any impression on me. I never knew, who this correspondent was, until I went abroad, to prepare for my ordination, I then learned that it was a young Lady, who was on the point of becoming a Catholic, but who for further satisfaction, wrote to me, and to one or two other Protestant Clergymen, to hear what we could say in defence of our religion. You may naturally suppose, that our answers instead of weakening, would rather confirm her attachment to the Catholic faith. It did so: she became a Catholic, and was on the point of being professed a Nun, in the order of the Sacred Heart, when she died a holy and edifying death. Owing to this correspondence, I became much more willing to give Catholics a favourable hearing, but it was yet three years before I was led to the further step of embracing the Catholic faith. This was brought about in the following manner. I had made acquaintance about the year 1829 with Mr. Ambrose Phillipps, eldest Son of the Member for Leicestershire. The conversion of this young Gentleman to the Catholic Faith, at the age of fourteen years, (about seven years before I knew him,) had very much surprised me, when I first heard of it. His character and conversation in-

terested me, and with pleasure I accepted his invitation, to spend a week at his Father's house at Garrenden Park. I was in hopes, that I should thus have an opportunity of inducing him to think more correctly about religion. I had indeed no great hopes of being able to dissuade him from the Catholic Religion altogether, nor did I earnestly wish it, for I had been already convinced, that men might be good Christians in that Religion. I left home for Garrenden Park, January, 24th, 1830, on Sunday night, after preaching two sermons, in my Protestant Church, at Brington in Northamptonshire, of which I was Rector, and little did I think then, that those two sermons would be the last, I should ever preach in a Protestant church. All the time at Garrenden, was nearly devoted to religious conversation, and I soon found, that instead of my being able to teach Mr. Phillipps, to think more correctly about religion, I was obliged in many points, to acknowledge, that I had to be a learner myself. I found him well able to stand his ground in defence of the Catholic faith against me, and some other more experienced Protestant Divines, who occasionally joined our conversation. At last finding, that I was contending with obstinacy, and not with the candour, I professed, I made up my mind to look into the affair with a new feeling, and with a real determination to follow the truth. This resolution gave me immediate comfort, and the consequence of it was, I was soon delivered from all my doubts. I had intended to have gone home on Saturday, to resume my duty at Brington, but I first went with Mr. Phillipps on Friday to Leicester where we dined and spent the evening with Mr. Caestrick, an old French Missionary, who had been stationed at Leicester for several years. The kindness, and patience with which he met my objections, made me more willing to listen to correction : his statements, and reasoning, came upon me with an authority and conviction, which I felt I could not, and must not resist, and before night, I declared my submission to the Church of God.

The conversation of Mr. Caestrick had satisfied me, that, the Roman Catholic Church, was *that* Church which our Saviour had founded, and as He had promised that Hell gates should never prevail against his Church, and that He and his Holy Spirit should remain with it for ever, teaching it all truth, and had commanded it should be obeyed in words so clear, " he that will not hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen and a publican," Matt. 18. 17. I felt convinced, that in obeying it, I was doing the will of Him, on whom I had placed my firm, and only dependence for peace and salvation, and in doing this, I

knew I could not be led astray. Thank God! I put aside the thought, which first offered of going home and looking into the affair the week after. The step which I took the next day of professing myself a Catholic, is one on which I have never reflected with any thing *but comfort*, as I do even at the present moment. The truth is so plain, that the Catholic Church was founded by our Saviour, that it has all the four marks of Christ's Church, and that it has Jesus Christ's infallible word, that it shall continue until the end of the world. The Protestants indeed tell us, that it was first the true Church, but that it afterwards fell into idolatry and damnable doctrine, but they *cannot* shew, HOW, WHEN, and WHERE, it fell into idolatry and damnable doctrine. I thought it therefore more prudent, (and so I now do think it,) to trust to the infallible promise of our Saviour, than to any man's assertions, and if my resolution to become a Catholic on this ground, was sudden, I defy any man to prove it *rash*. I saw that God promised me no better opportunity than the present, so I sent a messenger home that night, to announce my resolution, and I made my abjuration of the Protestant faith, in Leicester chapel, on Saturday morning the 30th of January. I had had for a long time no thoughts, but of serving God in the ministry of that Church, which ever it was, that I should find to be the true one; and so I at once offered myself to Doctor Walsh, Catholic Bishop of the midland district, who sent me to the English College at Rome; where by a happy coincidence of circumstances, I was ordained for the English Mission, May 26th, 1832, St. Augustine's day, in St. Gregory's Church, the very spot, from which St. Angustine received his mission from that holy Pope, to undertake the conversion of England, and I humbly ask your prayers, that I may be by his mercy an humble instrument towards its reconversion, which I trust is not far distant, and which it is the dearest desire of my heart in this world to see accomplished.

West Bromwich, I am, Dear Sir Yours, most truly,
January 3. 1834. GEORGE SPENCER.

Such is the account given by this Nobleman of his conversion to the Catholic faith, an account, which must be read with interest and triumph, by every adherent of the ancient faith; even those, who condemn the change, must admire his singleness of purpose, and his strength of mind The golden prospect lay before him; he might with confidence, look forward to some of the best, and

highest preferments in the established Church; yet he turned his back on them all, to accept the lowly charge of a Catholic Priest, at West Bromwich, in Staffordshire. To many, such a sacrifice will appear folly: but he had studied in the school of him, who suffered the loss of all things and accounted them as dung, that he might gain Christ, (Phil. III.) and has cheerfully renounced the riches and honours of this world, to associate himself in faith and worship, with those holy and illustrious members of the Catholic Church, who in every age and clime, have made it their aim, and their glory, to bring their dear but erring brethren to this one fold of the one shepherd Jesus Christ.

The examples of the Duke of Brunswick, and of the Hon. and Rev. George Spencer, ought to teach people of every age and condition, that, neither the concerns of this life, nor the principles of education, nor the fear of displeasing friends, nor the shame of owning themselves to have been in the wrong, ought to prevent them from embracing the truth, when ever God in his mercy, is pleased to let them know it.

It is the misfortune of too many christians, to be biassed by one, or more of these unwarrantable motives, in contradiction to the dictates of reason and religion. For as our Saviour has declared "he that will not hear his church, let him be unto thee as a heathen and a publican," it is certainly a most urgent duty of every person, to examine seriously, whether the communion, in which he has received his education, be that true Church or not. Dismissing all worldly considerations from his mind, he ought to reflect, and decide *seriously*, and *conscientiously*. What will the prejudiced opinions of his fellow mortals avail him at the tribunal of justice, at which we must all soon appear? Will any of them plead his cause at the bar of divine justice? Let him remember that the part which he now chooses, he chooses for ETERNITY! Let him then act *candidly*, and *seriously*, and *conscientiously*. Let him beg of God to give him grace to see the truth, and let him be determined to embrace it, in spite of every opposition, and every worldly consideration.

Adieu my dear friends, we must soon, very soon all appear at the tribunal of divine justice, and your candour must acknowledge that this advice which I now offer, cannot but then meet with the approbation of our awful judge.

FINIS.

C. Croshaw, Printer, 36, Pavement, York.